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ABSTRACT

This handbook provides novice video production teachers with a basic course outline containing information, activities, and lessons for use with high school students in an introductory television course. The contents are divided into five major sections: (1) before class begins, (2) preproduction, (3) production, (4) postproduction, and (5) the next step. Topics addressed in section one include the budget, supplies and repair estimates; no frills equipment; monthly video publications; consumer vs. industrial equipment; equipment considerations; optional features; additional equipment; equipment prices; working with video suppliers; back up units; organizing your class; building administrative and community support; concurrent activities; building a videotape library; and suitable student projects. Section two presents an overview of video productions, including preplanning, time, the visual image, the scenario, the draft, and scriptwriting. Examples of scripts with corresponding visuals are provided. The third section includes an equipment checklist and tips on equipment care, shooting techniques, effective lighting, adequate sound, learning to call action and cut, acting for film and video, conducting an interview, planning for variety, and producing commercials, newscasts, and music videos. Twenty-five possible production ideas for videos are also provided. Section four discusses the editing system, videotape, control tracks, rollback, editing techniques, and sound editing. The final section suggests possible uses for completed video projects. (JB)

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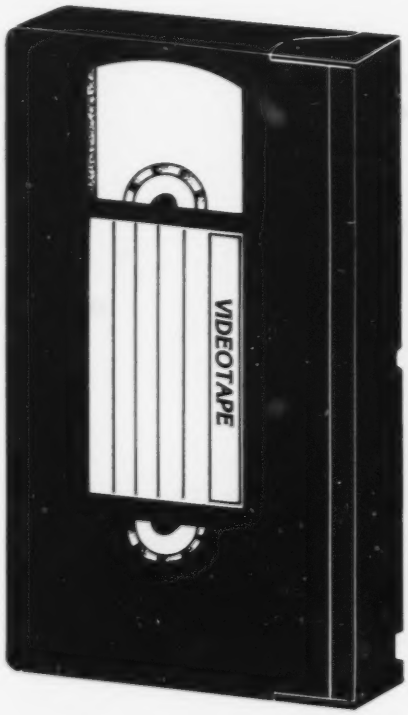
THE STUDENT VIDEO PRODUCTIONS HANDBOOK

A guide to planning and teaching student video productions



written by
Michael Druce

edited by
Bob Walker

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THE STUDENT VIDEO PRODUCTIONS HANDBOOK

by Michael Druce
edited by Bob Walker

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Michael Druce
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Introduction

The STUDENT VIDEO PRODUCTIONS HANDBOOK grew out of a need for a guide to teach student video productions.

The information contained within these pages represents what I've gained through my experience teaching video productions to high school students. It is offered to assist teachers who are venturing into video productions for the first time. It is not intended to serve as the last word on the subject. Simply, it is a starting point.

As you will note, this handbook is not a day by day lesson plan. The types of projects you and your students choose to undertake, each with their own particular time frames, makes producing a day by day lesson plan both restrictive and difficult. Instead this handbook is a course outline of information, activities and lessons. Some lessons can be covered in a few minutes, while other lessons and assignments may require several days. It is expected you will most likely want to build upon the material here and add lessons and assignments of your own, designed to meet your specific needs and time requirements. Where possible I have designed a basic lesson and included suggested discussion questions and activities. Although the information contained within these pages is for you the teacher, lessons have been written with a student audience in mind.

To avoid becoming too technical, some terms and phrases have been modified for the purpose of simplification.

If I have met my own instructional objective, then THE STUDENT VIDEO PRODUCTIONS HANDBOOK will provide you with enough information and activities to get you started on the road to a successful and satisfying teaching experience.

Mike Druce
1985

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1. Before Class Begins

Budget

Getting a video productions class off the ground may be a costly venture. To equip yourself with the necessary recording, lighting, sound and editing equipment can run into several thousand dollars. Later you will require additional funds to replace consumables such as light bulbs, gaffer's tape and videotapes, as well as funds for the care and repair of equipment.

If you are required to encumber funds for the year ahead, make sure you purchase a good supply of videotapes, bulbs and batteries. Ideally each student should be supplied with at least two videotapes for the duration of the class. Additional tapes will be needed for longer class projects, personal copies, exchange copies and recording programs from television.

For the most part video equipment is durable, but failures and breakage can occur. You should be prepared for such a possibility and budget accordingly or find out what provisions your school has for equipment repair.

Supplies and Repair Estimate†

EXPENDABLES (Bulbs, gaffer's tape, etc.)	$200
VIDEOTAPES* ($8.00 x 25 tapes)	$200
EQUIPMENT REPAIR	$50 - 250
BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS	$50
PROPS	$25
MISCELLANEOUS	$25
TOTAL	$550-750

For an equipment budget, refer to page 5. The next few pages will help you decide which items to prioritize for your particular program and circumstances.

No Frills Equipment

By doing a little creative comparison shopping, you may be able to pull together a video camera, recorder and television for as little is $900.*

It is important to keep in mind that $900 will not get you top-line equipment, however, once you get these three essential pieces you will be able to start filming.

Keeping Informed

Several monthly publications provide up-to-date equipment reviews, ratings and costs. These magazines also feature articles on production techniques and other aspects of the video industry.

VIDEO REVIEW
VIDEO
VIDEO BUYER'S GUIDE (Published Annually)
CONSUMER'S DIGEST
CONSUMER REPORTS
AMERICAN FILM
FILM COMMENT

Consumer Equipment vs. Industrial

Because the consumer market for video equipment is so much larger than the industrial market, equipment designed for home use tends to be less expensive than that designed for industrial or commercial use.

When comparing prices you will find that consumer equipment available through retail stores will be considerably less expensive than similar

†This budget is an estimated minimum.
*Videotape estimate is based upon providing ten students with two tapes each. Five additional tapes for copies.

*Prices quoted in this handbook are based upon information available as of Spring 1985.

industrial equipment that is handled exclusively through commercial suppliers. Though commercial suppliers handle some consumer equipment, they are primarily concerned with the industrial market.

Although more expensive because fewer units are produced, industrial and commercial-use equipment is generally more durable and reliable than consumer equipment. Consumer equipment often features fancy packaging and gadgets that do little to enhance the overall performance of the product.

Extra cost items such as built in character generators for instant titles and automatic focusing devices may offer only marginal results at best. What may appear worth the extra cost at first may prove worthless later.

Equipment Considerations

CHANGES AND USE

As happened with the computer industry, changes in the video industry are occurring rapidly. Every few months something new and exciting appears on the market that makes being able to make specific recommendations regarding equipment purchases a tenuous task at best.

The equipment you choose to purchase for your video productions program will largely be determined by your budget. You will decide whether to equip yourself with low-end (reasonably low in cost) equipment or whether to purchase more sophisticated and expensive equipment.

Your choice may be further guided by deciding whether your equipment will primarily receive in-studio use, or whether it will receive field use, requiring frequent movement between locations and use outside.

Equipment intended for extensive use in the field will have to be rugged enough to withstand varying weather conditions, frequent movement between the classroom and other locations, and being handled and transported by many different operators.

Questions regarding durability and use should be factors in your overall evaluation of your equipment needs.

CAMERA SIZE AND WEIGHT

Video cameras are not as cumbersome as they once were, however, you should select one that is large enough to handle comfortably.

Many of the newer cameras are quite compact and lightweight, which doesn't necessarily make them a good choice for video productions. A camera that is too small and too light can be as difficult to handle as one that is too bulky.

Your camera should be large enough to get a good grip on and be able to rest comfortably on the operator's shoulder for handheld shots. Small cameras don't allow for using the shoulder as support.

If you anticipate shooting a lot of handheld footage, you should consider whether or not the camera operator will be able to run and walk with the camera, be able to operate it from inside a vehicle, and ride on vehicles such as snow machines.

Once your students begin exploring the possibilities of video productions, you'll discover they will want to put cameras in everything from dog sleds to airplanes. Your camera ought to be flexible enough to meet those demands.

PORTABILITY

The newer, lightweight video cassette recorders make location shooting easier since the camera operator doesn't have as much weight to carry when shooting.

If you anticipate doing a lot of shooting away from your classroom, evaluate your prospective VCR purchase in terms of its ease of operation and ease with which it can be transported by the camera operator.

Portability is less of a consideration if the equipment will primarily be used in a studio situation.

The new camcorders, which feature recorders built into the camera, eliminate the need to carry around an extra piece of equipment.

The drawback with the camcorder is that if either the camera or the recorder fail, both units must be sent off for repair.

Separate units will allow you to keep producing if you have a spare.

CASING

Is the casing that houses the camera and recorder durable? What parts protrude from the equipment and present the possibility of being broken off?

Does the casing appear durable enough to withstand dropping? *As horrifying as it seems, cameras and recorders do get dropped and often survive.*

Does the cassette transport that accepts and rejects the video cassette tape seem sturdy enough to withstand several years of strenuous use?

CAMERA BASE

Is the screw-in attachment on the bottom of the camera that allows it to be connected to the tripod set in plastic or is it surrounded by metal?

Frequent use can weaken plastic and cause the screw-in to break out. This could mean replacing the camera casing.

Students should be warned against carrying the tripod while the camera is still mounted to it. To avoid weakening the screw-in, the camera should always be removed before moving the tripod.

MOVABLE PARTS

If it moves, it can be broken.

All movable parts should be inspected for ease of operation and reliability.

Will the pistol grip for the automatic zoom lens remain secure? Will the viewfinder remain in place?

Examine all switches, connectors and snap on/off parts for potential problems.

What may seem a trivial concern at first can become a headache later. Parts have a way of falling off or malfunctioning at the most inopportune moments. This is particularly true in cold weather, when plastic gets brittle and the operators have to wear gloves to operate the equipment.

PICTURE QUALITY

Check out the picture of your equipment prior to purchase.

Is the image clear or grainy? How well do the colors reproduce? What effect do varying lighting conditions have on the overall image? Will your camera handle low level lighting conditions?

The resolving power of a camera, which is its ability to project a detailed image, differs between makes and models.

Equipment with a resolving power of 200-250 lines produces a less detailed image than equipment that has a resolving power of 300 lines or more.

Poor resolution becomes a problem when second and third generation copies of tapes are viewed. To attain broadcast quality, you'll require equipment that provides 600 line resolution.

When comparing different cameras and recorders for picture quality, try to view the picture on the same make and model television set. This way you'll get an accurate comparison of the camera and recorder instead of a comparison of television sets.

FORMATS

Half inch tape, ¾ inch tape and 1 inch tape refer to the actual width of the videotape. The wider the tape, the more information can be stored on it and the better the picture quality.

Half Inch Formats: VHS is regarded as the current industry leader in ½ inch videotape equipment and will probably remain so for some time.

BETA, also a half inch format, *is not* compatible with VHS equipment. BETA is generally considered to produce a better overall picture than VHS.

¾ Inch: ¾ inch is a larger format and therefore produces a better image than ½ inch formats. Larger and less portable than ½ inch equipment, ¾ inch equipment is considerably more expensive.

8mm Video: 8mm Video is the latest of the new formats to hit the market. This smaller tape format utilizes lighter and smaller equipment. Since it is such a recent entry into the video market, it remains to be seen what place, if any, it will occupy in the area of video productions.

Optional Features

BUILT IN CHARACTER GENERATORS

Some cameras feature built in character generators that will allow you to create your own block letter titles on your videotape.

If this is an extra cost item, you should weigh the quality and added cost against creating your own more imaginative titles, through the use of title cards.

AUTO FOCUS

Though seemingly handy, automatic focus lenses can go out of focus because of air disturbances or sudden movement near the lens. Inspect this feature carefully before making a final decision.

Since learning to focus the camera is a necessary and essential part of the video productions process, auto focus lenses are of limited value.

FADE OUT

Fading out from a scene may be accomplished with a Fade Out mode found on some cameras. This feature is very useful if you don't have the special effects equipment required during post-production to create this effect.

Learning to use the fade out correctly requires practice, but the results can be extremely satisfying.

AUTOMATIC OR POWER ZOOM LENS

Beginners tend to overuse the automatic zoom, however, once the novelty of using it has worn off, automatic zooms can provide the most effective and smoothest method of getting a shot.

This is a feature well worth paying extra for.

WHITE BALANCE

Video camera tubes appear to react differently to natural light and artificial light. As a result, you must compensate for the differences between the two. Unless this compensation is made, the colors produced by the camera will appear to register incorrectly. Indoor footage will take on an orange tint and outdoor footage will appear bluish and green.

Some cameras require that a special filter be added to the lens for outside shooting, and others use what is known as a white balance mode, which, with a simple flip of a switch, will correct the camera for the appropriate color temperature.

Some cameras require the operator to focus on a white card before adjusting the white balance.

Many newer model cameras feature an automatic white balance that requires no adjustment.

The white balance feature is well worth saving yourself the hassle of carrying around an extra filter.

Additional Equipment

TRIPOD ($20 - $500)

A sturdy tripod with a smooth moving head is a must and a sound investment. Tripods are extremely useful when shooting close up footage. Handheld close up footage frequently appears jerky, since the camera operator cannot hold the camera perfectly still.

Although tripods can be found for as little as $20, inexpensive tripods are usually designed for still photography cameras, even though a video camera can be mounted on them.

Select a model with a solid, well-built frame; legs that extend rather than telescope from inside of each other; and one that features a head that will pan and tilt smoothly without any resistance and jerkiness.

AUTO DOLLY WHEELS ($100)

This device will allow you to attach a set of wheels to your tripod for easy movement. While functional for easy movement inside on smooth floors or carpets, auto dolly wheels are not practical for traditional dolly shots and use outside.

BATTERIES ($40 - $700)

Batteries are essential for outside shooting when a normal power source is not available. Most VCR's will accept a battery, which will provide the same amount of power as regular AC current.

Extended use in cold weather is hard on batteries and will cause them to drain faster than if used in warmer conditions. When shooting outside try to keep your batteries as warm as possible. Avoid setting your battery operated VCR directly on the ground, since it will absorb the cold even faster.

Batteries can develop a memory based upon how much time is left in them after use. Therefore, batteries should be fully recharged immediately after each use to ensure they'll provide maximum operating time.

Some batteries can run as high as $700, but most range in price from $40 to $50 for the average video system.

BATTERY BELT ($100 - $300)

A battery belt, sometimes referred to as a battery pack, has more storing capability than single batteries and allows for longer shots. Given its increased storing ability and the convenience of being able to be worn around the camera operator's waist, the battery belt is both useful and convenient.

In cold weather the battery belt can be worn under your parka and kept warm.

Battery belts are an excellent and highly recommended investment.

CARRYING CASES ($50 - $800)

Trunk style cases and lightweight canvas cases are available for both cameras and

EQUIPMENT*

MINIMUM SET UP	Low End	Mid Range	High End
Video Camera	400		
Recorder	300		
Television	200		
	900		
MIDDLE OF THE ROAD			
Video Camera	400	1000	
Recorder	600	900	
Monitor	200	400	
Tripod	50	100	
Batteries	50	100	
	1300	2500	
WELL-EQUIPPED			
Video Camera	400	1000	2000
Recorder	600	900	1200
Monitor	200	400	700
Tripod	50	100	200
Battery Pack	50	100	400
Lighting Kit	200	500	2100
Microphones	50	200	400
	1550	3200	7000
TOP LINE			
Video Camera	400	1000	2000
Recorder	600	900	1200
Monitor	200	400	700
Tripod	50	100	200
Battery Pack	50	100	400
Lighting Kit	200	500	2100
Microphones	50	200	400
Editing System	5000	10,000	15,000
	6550	13,200	22,000

*Prices are approximations only. Actual prices may be higher or lower depending on brand and features. Suggested prices for low end equipment are based upon the most basic models available. In other cases, high end industrial use equipment will be priced considerably higher than suggested on this list.

recorders. These items are useful for both storage and transportation.

The trunk style cases, also known by the tradename Anvil® Case, are not as easily handled as canvas cases, but they afford maximum protection and are especially well suited for shipping by airlines.

The smaller, lightweight canvas carrying cases are well suited for local travel and easily transported. They are generally small enough to qualify as carry on baggage on the airlines.

MICROPHONES ($25 - $1000)

In many recording situations the microphone built into the video camera will not provide the recording fidelity required. If the distance between your camera and the subject is too great, the video microphone may pick up too much air flow, which will produce a noticeable hiss or hollow sound on your tape. This is where extra microphones demonstrate their worth.

Although there is a considerable price variation in microphones, the inexpensive tie clip and lapel microphones are well suited for video productions. Despite their miniature format, these battery operated microphones are powerful and provide excellent pick up and tonal quality.

LIGHTING KIT ($225-$2100)

Additional lighting is often required when shooting inside. As many drama teachers know, effective and inexpensive lighting instruments can be rigged up with sockets and coffee cans.

If your budget will allow, you may wish to consider purchasing a video lighting kit.

Typically a kit will contain lighting instruments, filters, gels, reflectors, stands, cords, umbrellas, scrims and diffusion attachments, and shutters to control the shape and bounce of the light beam.

EDITING SYSTEMS ($8000 - $15,000)

Editing systems give video producers extreme flexibility and represent the single largest equipment investment.

Some sources advise that editing can be effectively accomplished with only two VCR's and one monitor. At best, that is the bare bones approach to editing, and one that will offer only marginal results.

An editing system should include two VCR's, two monitors and an edit controller.

Although a hefty investment, an editing system will open up many possibilities for projects and provide satisfying results.

Because students are generally sophisticated in regards to filming techniques, they'll become quickly dissatisfied with their projects if an editing system is not available. An editing system is the only way to make clean, glitch free audio and video edits.

Working with a Video Supplier

Some equipment suppliers are willing to pass along discounts if you buy all of your equipment from them, instead of shopping around for each piece.

Determine what your needs are and what your budget will allow and then negotiate the cost with the dealer. This may produce considerable savings.

If you are still unsure of what equipment is best suited to your program, discuss your needs with a dealer. He or she may be able to make recommendations regarding equipment that falls within your budget.

Communicate with other schools and find out what equipment they use and how they feel about it.

Back Up Units

Should you experience an equipment failure that requires a unit to be sent off for repair, having a back up unit on hand will allow you to continue without much interruption.

Waiting for a piece of equipment to be returned could seriously disrupt your lesson plans and force you into some hurried contingency planning.

If getting more than one system is out of the question, fine, don't worry about it. But keep an emergency lesson plan tucked away in your file, just in case.

If you are faced with the possibility of putting all of your funds into one top-line system, or settling for a little less and buying two systems, then decide what the worst thing that could happen is and then determine what you can live with.

RECOMMENDATION: Two systems offer greater flexibility and provide back up when needed.

Organizing Your Class

CLASS SIZE

Although there is no set number of students required for a video productions class, certain considerations should be weighed that will help establish a class size that is best suited to your school.

Since video production projects require camera and equipment operators as well as performers, you will need a class large enough to round out your cast and crew needs.

Students will frequently be outside the classroom working on productions. A smaller class will be easier to keep up with.

The amount of equipment you have available should also be a consideration. Since only two or three students can operate the equipment at once, what happens to the rest of the class when other students have the equipment tied up? Do you have enough equipment or concurrent work to keep your entire class working?

Given these considerations, ten students is a comfortable number of students to work with, if you have two video cameras and recorders.

If you have only one video system you should consider limiting your class to less than ten students.

LENGTH OF CLASS

Since so much time is consumed setting up equipment, rehearsing, shooting, and taking equipment down, a class of less than 50 minutes hardly seems practical.

Once production begins you and your students will be surprised at how much time even the simplest projects require. Ideally a video productions class should be offered as a full year course. Once students have mastered the basics, they will need the additional time to complete more involved projects.

If video productions is to be taught as a unit in another class, then the scope and scale of what is taught will have to be pared down considerably.

Regardless of the overall length of time the class is offered, students will more than likely have to invest after-school time on many projects.

Since extracurricular time will be involved, you might consider the possibility of organizing a video club in order to promote more interest in video work.

SCHEDULING VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

Depending on what part of the state you live in, your video productions class may be affected by daylight savings time and seasonal changes.

You will want to consider which hour during the day will be best suited for your class so you'll be able to take maximum advantage of available daylight.

If you have no control over the time your class is scheduled, then your preplanning should take into consideration the shortened daylight hours.

THE 50 MINUTE CLASS

After actual production projects have begun, a typical 50 minute video productions class may break down as follows:

Suggested Time	Activity
5 minutes	Class management Review day's assignment
15 minutes	Travel and set up of equipment
5 minutes	Rehearsal of scene
15 minutes	Shooting scene. (Actual shooting will take longer than rehearsal since the scene will probably require several different takes and be shot from different angles).
10 minutes	Take down equipment. Return to class. Evaluate footage. Preview next day's assignment.

50 minutes total time*

TIME SAVERS

Preplan: Know what you want to do before you set up your equipment and begin shooting.

Unit Shooting: When scenes occur in the same locations, but at different times, shoot these scenes together. If a change of clothes is necessary for your performers, prepare cast in advance.

Transportation: Arrange your transportation needs ahead of time. It should be ready when you are.

*On any given day the actual time required for each step will vary.

Advance Notice: When special rooms or areas of the school are needed for filming, give advance notice to avoid waiting for these areas to be cleared after you arrive.

Props & Equipment: Obtain everything you'll require for your shoot in advance. Make a prop and equipment checklist.

Student Schedules: Have cast and crew members make out schedules so everyone knows when a class member is scheduled to be away on a school sponsored activity.

Charge Batteries: Make sure batteries are charged up and ready when you are.

Extension Cords: Additional extension cords are always needed for lights and monitors.

Electrical Outlets: Locate electrical outlets in the areas where you plan to shoot and plan accordingly. This will help you determine how many extensions and multiple outlet extensions you'll need.

Production Book: Always have extra copies of your script on file. Keep one copy in a binder to be used during filming for making notes in and checking off shots as they are completed.

Stock Footage: Compile a videotape of stock footage that can be used later. Stock footage could include footage of games, students studying, cars driving down the street, planes landing and taking off, businesses and scenic shots. Taking the video equipment on school trips is an excellent way to get stock footage. Shooting buildings, houses, and highways in a city can prove extremely useful later when a student needs a city scene to complete a project. (This technique is used by producers of television series.)

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

The first rule of trying to avoid disaster is to anticipate everything that might go wrong on a shoot and to minimize those things you can do something about beforehand.

Some Typical Video Disasters

DISASTER *You arrive at a shooting location several miles from school only to discover someone has forgotten the videotapes or a piece of equipment.*

SOLUTION Make a checklist of everything needed for a shoot. Do a final check off before leaving for location.

DISASTER *You arrive at your shooting location and discover your batteries are dead or will only operate for a couple of minutes.*

SOLUTION Make sure your batteries are fully charged before leaving for the shoot. Keep batteries warm. Give serious consideration to purchasing a battery belt.

DISASTER *The scene you've just completed has no sound.*

SOLUTION Make sure your microphone is turned on.

DISASTER *Your scenes look dull and murky.*

SOLUTION Use additional lights.

DISASTER *You begin shooting while it is snowing, but then it doesn't snow again for several weeks.*

SOLUTION Don't film on days when it is snowing, unless you can complete all the shots you need. Reshoot your footage. Shoot close ups of your performers, as falling snow is more noticeable in long shots. Shoot other scenes and wait until it snows again to complete your falling snow scenes.

DISASTER *A scene cannot be completed in one day. You are required to finish the scene the next day. Unfortunately, your performers come to school the next day wearing different clothes.*

SOLUTION Write shorter scenes. Require your performers to keep an extra set of clothes at school to assure scene continuity.

DISASTER *You've filmed your magnum opus on so many unmarked tapes that you can't find that one crucial piece of footage required to finish your video.*

SOLUTION Reshoot scene. Mark all tapes. Log all footage on tapes and keep filed for later reference.

DISASTER *You spend your entire class period shooting only to discover all of your footage is green.*

SOLUTION Set your white balance as a matter of habit. Adjust indoor and outdoor settings on camera.

DISASTER *You lose beginning footage because of glitches.*

SOLUTION Begin filming for about ten seconds before you call for the scene to begin. (See sections on lead-in and rollback.)

DISASTER *You lose the ends of your scenes*

SOLUTION Continue filming a few extra seconds after the action of the shot is complete.

DISASTER *You've filmed the beginning and ending of your script, and all that remains to be filmed is the middle. Over the weekend your lead actress, who used to have shoulder length hair, has gotten her hair bobbed.*

SOLUTION Make your actress wear a hat during the remaining scenes to be shot. Reshoot the ending of your video. Rework the ending of your video to make it appear as if it occurs much later.

DISASTER *Your lead performer moves to another school before completing the final scene of your video.*

SOLUTION Rewrite the ending. Script an accident involving the lead that requires plastic surgery and replace that person with another student.

DISASTER *No matter what you do, your version of* Star Wars *appears to have been filmed in a classroom.*

SOLUTION Build a multi-million dollar set or consider writing scripts that don't require sets and special effects beyond your capabilities.

DISASTER *Everything looks terrible. The situation appears hopeless. You've got hours of crummy footage. You've given serious consideration to entering another profession.*

SOLUTION Establish realistic expectations. You gain as much knowledge and experience from a video failure as a success. Continue to produce. Compare your projects with those of others. Analyze and study videos. Develop an eye for technique. Preplan. Above all, don't give up.

Building Administrative and Community Support

As with any school program, video productions needs the support of the administration and community. Your approach to the class and the attitudes you convey about its worth can determine to a great extent how others view it.

If video productions is seen as only another fun elective, it will hardly merit serious consideration. The idea that video productions is a movie making class should be discouraged. Completed videos are the culmination of a long and educationally challenging process.

Video productions should be approached as a class that develops and improves the communication and creative skills of students. It incorporates the writing skills of language arts, the verbal skills of speech and drama, the creative expression of creative writing, the investigative skills of journalism, and the technical skills of vocational courses and computer technology.

Community support and enthusiasm for your program can be generated by showing the community what your students are doing. Plenty of opportunity exists through local cable access and the statewide educational channel to have the work of your students shown locally and statewide.

Hosting a video night at your school is an effective way of getting community members into the school and your classroom to learn what you and your students are doing.

When adults are needed for roles in your students' productions, why not encourage parents and other faculty members to participate?

Video exchange programs with other schools and participating in video contests will allow for additional exposure.

And finally, don't overlook the Department of Education. D.O.E. is an excellent source of information for what is being done in schools around the state. D.O.E. publications often feature stories on innovative programs, one of which may be yours once you get your program established.

Concurrent Activities

Your planning should take into consideration provisions for concurrent activities. When equipment is in use by part of your class, what will the rest of your students be doing?

Short lessons and activities can be of immense help during this period of time.

For example, when one group is using the equipment, other students can be writing scripts, storyboarding scripts, logging footage on tapes, rehearsing scenes, or researching information for future projects.

Additional assignments could include reports on subject related books and articles, reports on techniques and equipment, critiquing scripts and videos, and viewing films for techniques, lighting, sound, and story construction.

Building a Videotape Resource Library

To reinforce the techniques of video production you wish to impart to your students, it will prove helpful if you will begin to build a mini-library of films, videos, commercials, and music videos.

By studying other videos, students can gain a wealth of information once they begin to ask questions about what they see. Typically a student should ask, "How was that done? What technique achieved that effect?"

Commercials and music videos make the best use of the most up-to-date techniques used in the industry.

Studying films can prove insightful in terms of observing camera techniques, lighting, sound, and story structure.

Group Projects Vs. Individual Projects

It would be wonderful if every student in your class could produce four or five videos each. Given the limitations of time, students who are asked to perform in other videos are giving up time to produce their own projects. Therefore, you may wish to consider alternating group projects with individual projects.

Complex projects of 10-20 minutes in length could require several months to complete and would be better suited for group involvement.

On the other hand, projects such as interviews will take considerably less time to produce.

Once students begin generating ideas for projects, you will be able to determine the best approach for your class and how to schedule time.

Hollywood Vs. Student Video

Today's students, because they have been exposed to so much television and film, visualize their own productions by the production standards of Hollywood.

Within a matter of seconds, a full length production plays out in their minds, replete with all the glitz, glitter and special effects Hollywood is known for.

As a result, students can become impatient when they realize a production is taking a lot longer to complete than they originally envisioned and disappointed when their own productions don't have the look of a $20 million film.

Once students understand the limitations of video productions and modify their expectations, then they'll begin to explore its potential.

How and Where Video is Used

- Television broadcast news
- Advertising industry
- Motion picture studios
- Law firms
  - taping testimony
  - video wills
- Real Estate
  - videotapes of homes and property

- Education
  - lessons
  - projects
  - special programs
  - athletic events
- Weddings
- Parties
- Home videos
- Corporations
  - presentations
  - training videos
- Music industry
- Dating services
- Identification
  - videos of children in case they get lost
- Insurance
  - videotaping contents of homes and businesses
- Independent producers
  - documentaries
  - educational videos
- Law enforcement
  - training videos
- Armed services
  - training videos
  - public information videos
- Legislature
  - videotaping sessions
- Personnel agencies
  - video resumes
- Video yearbooks
- Sports shops and athletic clubs
  - videotaping techniques
    - golf swing
    - jogging style
    - bowling style
- Airline industry
  - flight simulations

VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

Example 36 week video productions course outline*

Weeks	
1	Introduction Overview of class View examples of past student projects View examples of non student videos
2 - 3	Preplanning Scriptwriting Script structure
4 - 5	Equipment review Equipment set up Care and operation of equipment Shooting techniques
6 - 7	In-camera editing Producing a sixty second silent in-camera edited video
8	Lighting techniques Lighting exercises
9	Sound techniques Sound exercises
10 - 11	In-camera editing with sound Producing a sixty second in-camera edited video with sound
12 - 15	Producing a group project — #1 (Music video or short film)
16 - 17	Editing techniques Editing group project #1
18 - 19	Writing and producing a newscast
20 - 21	Writing and producing an interview
22 - 23	Writing and producing commercials
24 - 26	Individual project #1
27 - 30	Group project #2
31 - 35	Final project: Group or individual
36	Video and film schools Employment opportunities Community and school showings.

*Since actual production time on projects may vary, this outline can serve only as a suggestion. You may accomplish more or less depending on your individual situation.

VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

Course Description

Video Productions is designed to provide students with the basic skills necessary to conceptualize and produce a video production. Instruction will include care and use of equipment, scriptwriting, editing and production techniques. Various applications of video production and employment will be explored.

Course Content

PREPLANNING

A. SCRIPTWRITING
- Scenario
- The first draft
- Scriptwriting terminology
- Revising the first draft
- Dividing a screenplay into acts
- Shots, scenes and sequences
- Reversals
- Conflict and character
- Screenplay formats

B. EQUIPMENT
- Identification
- Care
- Use

PRODUCTION

C. SHOOTING TECHNIQUES
- Camera angle
- Camera movement
- Point of view
- Continuity
- Screen direction
- Terminology

D. LIGHTING
- Equipment
- Lighting techniques

E. SOUND
- Equipment
- Sound techniques

F. ACTING
- Video/film vs. stage
- Techniques

POSTPRODUCTION

G. EDITING
- Theory
- Equipment
- Techniques
  - video
  - sound

H. Types of video projects
- Fiction
- Documentary
- Commercials
- Newscasts
- Interviews
- Music Video

I. FILM/VIDEO THEORY
- Criticism
- Appreciation
- Aesthetics

J. EDUCATION
- Video/Film Schools

K. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- Where video is used
- Creating a video portfolio

2. Preprocduction

Overview of Video Productions

THE VISUAL EXPRESSION OF IDEAS

Marshall McLuhan once observed that *the content of any medium is another medium.*

If McLuhan is right, then video productions is not really about video at all — it is about writing.

Video merely serves as the tool for bringing the written word to the screen. It is an ideal medium for the expression of ideas.

The goal of a video productions class should be communication. If effective communication is to take place, you will be challenged to think creatively; you will develop and polish your written and verbal skills; you will conceptualize projects and bring them to completion; you will improve your interactive skills with other students; you will master the techniques of video production; and you will assume responsibility for the care and operation of sophisticated equipment.

Video productions offers you the unique opportunity to express your ideas. Whatever projects you choose to undertake, what finally appears on the screen will be an expression of your thoughts, whether you choose to cast yourself as a main character or select others to convey your ideas and feelings. No matter what the project, fictional or nonfictional, what is seen communicates.

As the creative force behind a project, you will choose what is to be said and how it is presented. If you wished to make a video about the problem of drug abuse among teenagers, you would have several options available to you.

- You could treat drug abuse as the subject of a documentary.
- You might conduct an interview with drug counselors.
- You could film a debate.
- You could film a discussion among students.
- You could write a fictional video based on fact.

The format is up to you. The important thing is that you have the means to share your ideas with others. That is why video is such a powerful and influential medium. It can reach many people. It can inform as well as entertain. But what it has to say depends on what you have to say.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why are television and film such powerful and influential mediums?
2. How can they shape opinion?
3. What are some of the strengths of these mediums?
4. What are some weaknesses?
5. Why did you enroll in video productions?
6. What do you expect to learn in this class?
7. Who is Marshall McLuhan?
8. What does his statement mean?
9. Why should communication be the goal of this class?
10. Explain how what appears on screen is an expression of someone's ideas.
11. Is television news an expression of someone's ideas?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Assignment #1 — Explain where video is used.

Objective: To develop an understanding of how and where video is used.

Assignment #2 — Brainstorm ideas for video projects.

Objective: To develop an awareness of the many kinds of programs and subjects that students can explore in video productions.

Assignment #3 — Evaluating videos.

Objective: To develop an understanding of the themes and ideas presented in videos.

Procedure: Select some short videos for class viewing. Discuss the themes and ideas presented.

Assignment #4 — Evaluating film.

Objective: To develop an understanding of the themes and ideas presented on film.

Procedure: Select a film and view it. Discuss the ideas and themes presented. Discuss any photographic techniques that stand out.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

MTV
Night Tracks
Commercials

MOVIES:

Citizen Kane
Casablanca
They Shoot Horses, Don't They?
The Front
Fail Safe
West Side Story
Fiddler on the Roof
Days of Heaven
Raiders of the Lost Ark
Star Wars
The Empire Strikes Back
The Eskimo

Time

TIME presents one of the biggest problems a video productions class will face.

Unrealistic expectations regarding what can be accomplished within a given period of time can be the undoing of a successful production.

Although video is immediate, a completed production is not. The actual production process is often laborious and time consuming. It is easy to lose enthusiasm for a project when the end is weeks or even months away.

The preplanning, production and post-production of a four minute music video could take as much as eight weeks of class time.

Reviewing the steps involved in producing a typical music video indicates how much time can be consumed.

PREPLANNING

- Selection of music
- Transcribing lyrics (if lyric sheet is not available).
- Developing a story idea.
- Writing a script.
- Storyboard or shot list detailing camera angles, techniques and shot composition.
- Determining locations.
- Determining which shots can be filmed as a unit. (Same location, but different times.)
- Selecting cast members.
- Selecting props.
- Determining make-up needs, if required.
- Determining costume needs.
- Determining special set needs.
- Developing a shooting schedule.
- Planning for lighting.
- Planning for sound (if necessary).

PRODUCTION

- Selecting equipment to be used.
- Gathering props, make-up and costumes.
- Travel to locations (both in school and out).
- Setting the scene.
- Rehearsal.
- Shooting the scene.
- Evaluation of footage (to determine if reshooting is required).
- Take down equipment.
- Travel back to class.
- Plan for next day's shooting.

POSTPRODUCTION

- Stripe master tape.
- Lay down sound track.
- Review footage and make a shot list.
- Review script.
- Select footage for final cut.
- Edit footage.
- Review completed video to detemrine if changes are necessary.
- Make copies (if needed).
- Show final product.
- Evaluate.

As you can see, seemingly simple projects can require an astounding amount of time.

It is most important that you understand this process and can bear up until completion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is time one of the biggest problems a video productions class will face?
2. Why is it easy to lose enthusiasm for a project?
3. What can you do to help establish realistic expectations about a video project and maintain your enthusiasm?

Preplanning

NOTHING HAPPENS WITHOUT A PLAN OF ACTION

The most important point you should remember before beginning a production is that *nothing happens without a plan.*

Resist the temptation to grab a camera and begin shooting. Unless you begin with a plan, you will soon learn that all you will have managed to capture on videotape is a random series of unrelated shots that have no point.

Regardless of the kind of project you undertake, preplanning is the key to successful completion. This rule applies to all projects, whether you are shooting footage of a basketball game or filming your own soap opera.

Since video communicates a visual expression of ideas, know what ideas you wish to impart to your audience.

You should ask yourself:

- Who is my audience?
- What will my audience learn from my production?
- What do I want to say?
- What story will be told?
- What is the purpose of my production?
- How will I tell my story?
- Will my production entertain, inform, or demonstrate?

Unless you begin your production with a clear-cut plan, you may be defeated before you begin. Productions that evolve during the production process are rarely as satisfying as those that begin with direction.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What things should a videomaker consider before doing any actual shooting?
2. Why is preplanning important?
3. What pitfalls may be avoided by preplanning?

ASSIGNMENT

Preplanning a Short Video

Objective: Students will demonstrate the factors that are considered in the preplanning stage of production.

Procedure: Develop a story line for a short video. The story should have a beginning, middle, and an end.

After developing the story line, decide what other considerations should be addressed if this story were to be shot in or near school.

Points to Consider:

Does the script tell a story?
What is the video about?
Can this project be filmed?
Does the script contain special effects, sets and props that are not available?
What equipment will be needed?
How many cast members will be needed?
What locations will be used?
Is special lighting required?
What sound equipment will be needed?
Will cost be a factor?
Will transportation be necessary?
Will weather affect this production?

Evaluation:

Share your ideas with the class. See if others had ideas you did not consider. What did you think of that others did not?

The Visual Image

LET THE MEDIUM WORK FOR YOU

Alfred Hitchcock once defined film as a series of pictures so arranged as to control and manipulate the viewer's attention.

A screenplay, then, is a story that is told with pictures. The visual image is the main ingredient of film and video.

Whenever possible, the visual image should be used to tell the story of your video production. Dialogue should be used to amplify your video, not take the place of the visual image.

In a scene that requires a character to express emotional pain, the visual image of that character's pain expressed in his eyes and on his face can be far more effective than dialogue that says, "I am suffering."

No dialogue is necessary to understand the pain and suffering of the victims of famine in Ethiopia. The visual images of the Ethiopians are both frightening and haunting. No matter how well written, dialogue could never surpass the impact of those images.

Let the medium work for you.

Some film scholars are of the opinion that silent films are a truer expression of the medium

than sound films. That is something you'll decide for yourself.

When used interdependently and used effectively, image and sound can create a stunning impact.

To create a memorable and satisfying video, you must first begin with a memorable and satisfying script. Remember, a script is not just dialogue, but a description of everything the audience will see and hear in your finished program.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can a visual image create a stronger impression than effective dialogue?
2. Examine some famous photographs. Discuss their impact.
3. Discuss some films you've seen in terms of the impact of some of the visual images.

The Scenario

AN IDEA TAKES SHAPE

Scripts begin as an idea. As the idea takes shape, an outline develops that briefly describes the story and the characters. This outline is called a *scenario.*

The scenario is the first step in the script writing process. It serves as your model and guide. As your script takes shape, it may or may not depart from the scenario as your ideas evolve more clearly. Writers often say that scripts can develop a life of their own. That once they start writing, the script seems to open up new ideas and possibilities that weren't necessarily considered during the scenario writing stage.

WRITING YOUR SCENARIO

Your scenario should outline your main characters, tell when and where your story takes place, and briefly describe what happens in your story. A scenario may be as short as half a page or may require two or three pages of description.

SAMPLE SCENARIO

LOVELY STORY

(A parody of Eric Segal's LOVE STORY)

LOVELY STORY *is the story of Ollie and Jenni, a couple of college students who fall in love. Their story takes place on campus and the surrounding area. At first Ollie and Jenni don't like each other. Later they fall in love after Jenni agrees to have coffee with Ollie. Ollie asks Jenni to marry him and meet his parents. Ollie's parents are shocked and immediately despise Jenni. They inform Ollie that unless he gets rid of Jenni they'll refuse to pay his way through law school. Ollie marries Jenni anyway, determined to make it on their own. Everything turns out happily until Jenni comes down with a fatal illness. Jenni dies in Ollie's arms. The story is told in a flashback.*

At this point we have a fairly detailed outline of what this short fictional video will be about.

Although the final script may turn out somewhat different than suggested by the scenario, the scenario provides a starting point and direction in which to move.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain the importance of a scenario.
2. Why may the final script be different from the scenario?

ASSIGNMENT

Writing a Scenario

Objective: To understand how scenarios form the basis of an effective screenplay.

Procedure: Using one of the ideas you came up with during the exercise on preplanning, develop a scenario for a short video.

Remember to include information on your characters, when and where the story takes place, and what will happen.

Tip: Be sure to plan the ending of your story. Know where you want to go. You'll find it much easier to write a script once you know how it ends.

The First Draft

TURNING YOUR SCENARIO INTO A SCRIPT

Once you have written your scenario, you'll want to begin making a first draft of your script.

In your first draft you'll rough out your story. For convenience you may want to think of your script as a series of separate scenes linked together to make a complete script. Each scene is a little story in itself that helps make up the larger, overall story of your script.

You may choose one of two methods of put-

ting your script together. You may choose to make a complete written script that carefully details everything the viewer will see and hear, or you may choose to make a storyboard script in which you sketch out what the viewer will see in each scene and include all the necessary dialogue.

THE WRITTEN SCRIPT FORMAT

Whichever method of script construction you choose, it helps to number your scenes.

In the written script, you'll number each scene, explain what the viewer will see, and include a dialogue.

The following example demonstrates the format of the written script.

As you can see, the written script gives a scene by scene breakdown. It tells whether a scene takes place inside or outside. The action and location of the scene are described and dialogue is indicated when needed.

Since this is a first draft of the script, specific camera shots have not been included. Once your script is complete, then you'll want to plan your shots in detail.

NIGHT OF THE BIG GAME

FADE IN:

Scene 1 INTERIOR — JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM — NIGHT

Coach Bill Phillips stands in the middle of a group of eager basketball players. The players are seated on the benches and floor around Phillips. It is a few minutes before the state championship game.

Coach Phillips

I don't have to tell you guys how important this game is. We're either gonna leave here tonight as champions, or we're gonna be second.

Scene 2 EXTERIOR — JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Susie, dressed in her Jefferson High cheerleader uniform, hops out of her car and runs towards the gym with pom-poms and a megaphone. She is late.

Scene 3 INTERIOR — HIGH SCHOOL GYM

Various shots of excited fans talking, waving pennants, eating popcorn and making their way to their seats.

Scene 4 CUT TO:

COACH PHILLIPS STILL TALKING TO HIS PLAYERS

Coach Phillips

You know how important this game is to our school and community.

ANGLE ON BOBBY ROBERTS

Bobby, a player, is not really listening to Phillips. His thoughts have drifted back to a game two weeks earlier.

Scene 5 INTERIOR — HIGH SCHOOL GYM — TWO WEEKS EARLIER

Bobby races down court with the ball past Coach Phillips, unaware that Phillips is trying to get his attention.

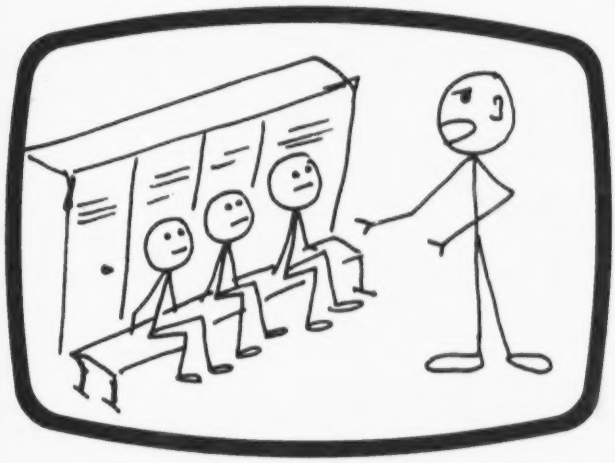
INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION CENTER

DATE: _____

CLIENT: _____

TITLE: NIGHT OF THE BIG GAME

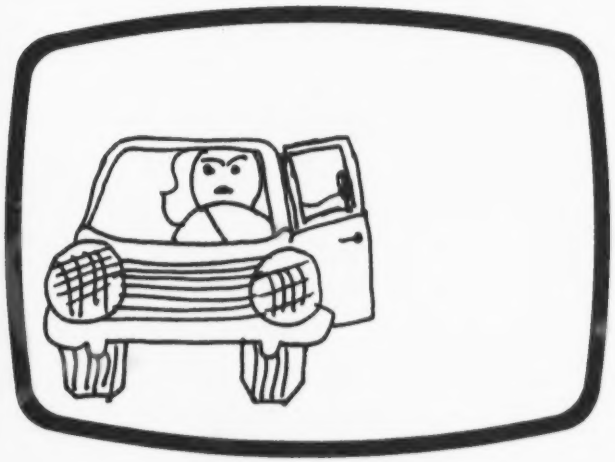
JOB NO: _____



#1 INT- J.H.S. LOCKER ROOM
COACH PHILLIPS TALKING TO PLAYERS

(AUDIO) "I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU GUYS HOW IMPORTANT THIS GAME IS."

(AUDIO) "WE'RE EITHER GONNA LEAVE HERE CHAMPIONS, OR WE'RE GONNA BE SECOND)."



#2 CHEERLEADER SUSIE RUSHES TO G/F

(MUSIC OVER)

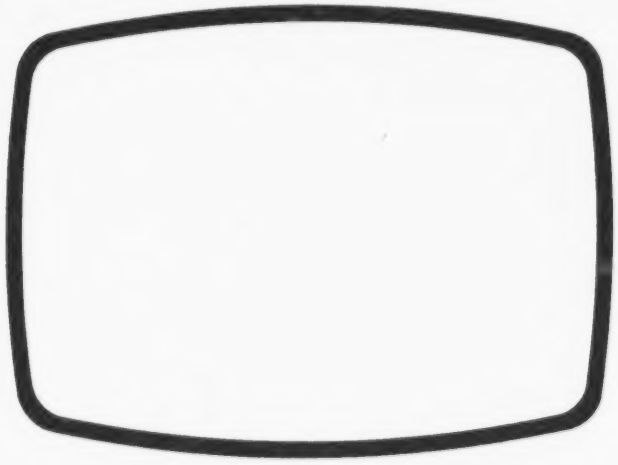
INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION CENTER

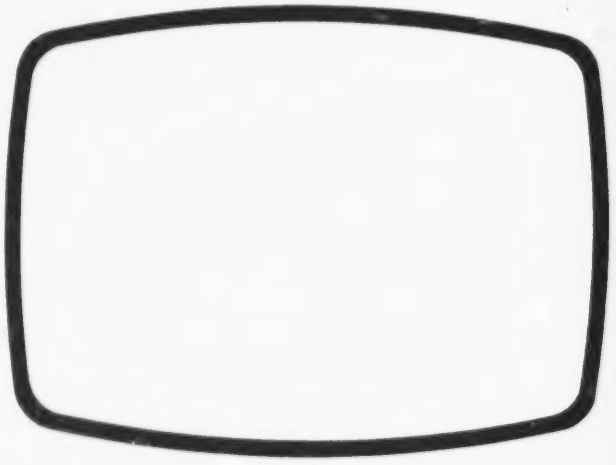
DATE: _____

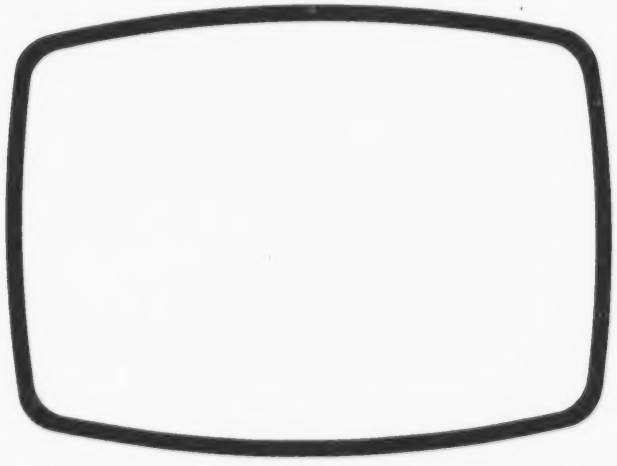
CLIENT: _____

TITLE: _____

JOB NO: _____







A later lesson will deal more specifically with scenes; however, as a rule, a scene changes when the action shifts to a different location.

THE VIDEO STORYBOARD FORMAT

Creating a video storyboard does not require you to be an artist. You can roughly sketch out your scenes with stick figures.

Some writers prefer to make each panel a different scene, and others like to use each panel to suggest each different shot within a scene.

Below each panel on the video storyboard space is provided for an explanation of what is to be seen and dialogue.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the two methods of scriptwriting?
2. Explain each method.
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

ASSIGNMENT

Writing a First Draft

Objective: To develop a first draft script from a scenario.

Procedure: Using the scenario you developed for the previous assignment, develop a first draft script.

(See following lesson for scriptwriting terms.)

Scriptwriting Terms

SPELLING OUT WHAT THE CAMERA SEES

Fade In: Fade into video from a black screen.

Fade Out: Fade out from video to a black screen.

Int: Interior scene.

Ext: Exterior scene.

Angle On: Indicates who or what is the subject of the shot.

Close: A tighter shot than the angle on.

Another Angle: Indicate a change of angle without changing the subject of the shot.

Various Angles: A variety of shots.

Cut To: Change to another scene.

Voice Over (VO): Dialogue or narration is heard over the scene without seeing the speaker.

Point of View: The camera appears to view the action through the eyes of a character.

Reverse Angle: Opposite of the point of view shot. The person who was being viewed in the point of view shot now sees things from his or her perspective.

Over the Shoulder: The camera is positioned behind and to the side of a subject.

Insert: A close up of something to be inserted into a scene. (Example: the contents of a note, the face of a watch, the label in a jacket).

Moving Shot: Camera follows the action. (Compare this shot to the trucking shot in the shooting techniques lesson.)

KEEP THINGS SIMPLE

Scriptwriting terms can aid the scriptwriting process, but they can also bog a script down.

Don't waste time overusing these terms in your scripts by trying to detail every specific movement in a scene. Describe only what is necessary to the reader's understanding.

As you gain writing experience you'll learn to use these terms in moderation.

Note how little terminology is used in the two versions of NIGHT OF THE BIG GAME.

Remember: keep things simple. Don't clutter up your scripts with excessive shot descriptions and writing terms.

PUTTING TERMINOLOGY INTO PRACTICE

This longer version of NIGHT OF THE BIG GAME, on the following page, shows how scriptwriting terms can be used.

ASSIGNMENT

Identifying Scriptwriting Terms

Objective: To become familiar with scriptwriting terms for later use in scripts.

Procedure: Explain each of the following terms

Fade In	Insert
Fade Out	Close
Int	Moving Shot
Ext	Various Angles
Angle On	
Another Angle	
Cut To	
Voice Over	
Point of View	
Reverse Angle	
Over the Shoulder	

NIGHT OF THE BIG GAME

FADE IN:

Scene 1 INT — JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL GYM — NIGHT

VARIOUS ANGLES

The bleachers are filled with excited basketball fans. The band is playing the fight song. Cheerleaders cheer from the sidelines. Posters and banners line the walls proclaiming the rivalry between the Jefferson Patriots and the Lee Generals.

ANGLE ON SCORE CLOCK

as the seconds tick off to the beginning of the game.

ANGLE ON THE BOYS' LOCKER ROOM DOOR

Scene 2 INT — BOYS' LOCKER ROOM

COACH PHILLIPS is giving his pre-game pep talk to his players. Basketball players dressed out in their uniforms are seated on benches and on the floor around Phillips.

Phillips

I don't have to tell you how important this game is to our school and to our community.

VARIOUS ANGLES OF PLAYERS

taking in everything Phillips has to say.

Phillips (VO)

This is where we win it, or we offer our congratulations.

ANGLE ON BOBBY ROBERTS

who is not really listening to Phillips. His thoughts are drifting as Phillips' VOICE FADES.

Phillips (VO)

It's gonna take everyting we've got to . . .

CUT TO

Scene 3 INT — JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL GYM — NIGHT, A WEEK EARLIER

VARIOUS ANGLES

of excited fans watching the action and looking up at the clock. Only five seconds remain with Jefferson trailing the visiting team by one point.

MOVING

Bobby races down court with the ball.

Scene 3 (Cont.)

ANGLE ON PHILLIPS
glancing from the clock to Bobby.

Phillips
Roberts! Roberts!

CLOSE ON BOBBY
oblivious to Phillips' cries looks over his shoulder at the clock.

BOBBY'S POV
two seconds remain on the clock.

ANGLE ON PHILLIPS
agitated and yelling.

Phillips
Time! Time!

BOBBY'S POV
racing toward the net.

PHILLIPS' POV
as Bobby goes in for the layup and misses.

REVERSE ANGLE ON PHILLIPS
throwing down his clipboard.

ANGLE ON BOBBY
as the final buzzer SOUNDS and he realizes the game is lost.

RESOURCES*

Two excellent sources of information regarding the art of scriptwriting:

Screenplay — The Foundations of Screenwriting, A Step-by-Step Guide from Concept to Finished Script, by Syd Field, Delta Books (Dell Publishing) 1979.

The Screenwriter's Workbook, by Syd Field, Dell Publishing Co., 1984

*These books are fun, easily readable and provide an invaluable wealth of practical information.

Revising Your First Draft

SWEATING THE DETAILS

Once you have completed your first draft, you should go back and make revisions. You may find you'll want to change some dialogue or narrative, add or take out scenes, rearrange scenes, or make significant changes in the storyline.

It is a rare script that doesn't require revision and polish. You should reread your script carefully and take note of any problem areas such as scenes that run too long or ideas that are unclear.

In some cases it may be necessary to make a second and third draft of your script. The importance of a well-crafted script cannot be overstated.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain the importance of revision.
2. What should you look for when revising your first draft?

ASSIGNMENT

Revising Your First Draft

Objective: To understand the importance and process of script revision.

Procedure: Using the first draft you wrote for the previous assignment, revise as necessary.

ADVANCED SCRIPTWRITING

The remaining lessons in this unit are designed for video productions classes that want to study scriptwriting techniques in greater detail. These lessons are primarily designed for developing longer format fictional screenplays.

Classes not yet ready for these advanced lessons are encouraged to skip the remainder of this unit and proceed with the unit on production.

As students gain more experience, they may want to return to the advanced scriptwriting lessons later.

Dividing a Screenplay into Acts

THE BEGINNING — THE MIDDLE — THE END

If the scenario you wrote tells a story, chances are it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. If so, then you have the essential ingredients of a well-told story.

All projects, regardless of content, should have a starting point, a middle, and a conclusion. This is true of commercials, interviews, fictional films, newscasts and footage of basketball games. Without beginnings and endings, your footage doesn't provide the viewer with a satisfactory reason for viewing it.

The requirements of beginning, middles and endings differ somewhat for fictional and nonfictional projects. For instance, the beginning of a basketball game may require only a simple title indicating which teams are playing. The beginning of a fictional script will be much different, since more than a simple introduction will be required for understanding.

Beginnings and middles and ends can be thought of as acts.

Act I — The Beginning
Act II — The Middle
Act III — The End

Viewing your screenplay as three distinct acts will help in developing your story idea and moving it forward.

Each act serves a specific purpose.

WHAT HAPPENS IN EACH ACT?

The Beginning — Act I

Fade in:
Titles
Establish scene — location and time.
Introduce major characters.
Indicate what characters want. What are their goals?
Indicate what kind of film this is — humorous or dramatic?
What happens that suddenly gets your main characters involved in an unexpected situation or conflict?

The Middle — Act II

This is generally the longest part of your story, since the majority of action takes place here.
As a result of an unexpected happening in Act I, your characters are locked in a conflict of some kind with other characters or natural forces.
The conflict, and your characters' attempts to deal with it, will form the bulk of action in Act II.
As in Act I, another incident occurs which suddenly changes the major situation of your characters again.
This second unexpected situation may result in an end to the conflict your characters have been involved with.
When the conflict of your story can no longer continue, you have reached the climax of your story.

The Resolution — Act III *(The End)*

Once your conflict has ended, your characters attempt to put their lives back together.
In this act we want to know what happens to them. How do things turn out? What will the future hold?
It is time to wrap up loose ends and answer any unanswered questions.
End titles.
Fade out.

DIVIDING LOVELY STORY INTO ACTS

Act I

In Act I we meet Oliver sitting by himself on a merry-go-round at the playground remembering Jenni.
We go into Oliver's flashback.
Oliver and Jenni meet at the college library.
Later they meet for coffee and talk.
That night Oliver realizes he is in love with Jenni and calls to tell her.

Act II

In Act II Oliver and Jenni travel to meet Oliver's parents.
Oliver's parents disapprove of Jenni and threaten to take away Oliver's money for law school.
Jenni's father encourages her to marry Oliver.
Determined to make it on their own, Oliver and Jenni get married.
Jenni becomes ill.
Jenni dies.

Act III

Oliver is seen at Jenni's grave.
Fade out.

Although the actual LOVELY STORY script is only ten pages long, it can be divided into three acts. Act III is very short.

Act I ends when the unexpected happens to the main character. Oliver falls in love with Jenni.

Act II ends on another unexpected note. Jenni becomes ill and dies.

Act III — Oliver is seen at the gravesite and finally walking away.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain why all projects should have a beginning, middle and end.
2. Briefly explain what happens in each act.
3. Why does most of the story take place in Act II?

ASSIGNMENT #1

Dividing a Film into Acts

Objective: Students will divide a film into three separate acts.

Procedure: Select a film for viewing and then make a determination of where each act occurs.

ASSIGNMENT #2

Divide your own Screenplay into Acts

Objective: Students will divide scripts into three separate acts.

Points to Consider:

ACT I: When and where does your story take place?
Is it a comedy or drama?
What is the story about?
What past situations (if any) require explanation?
Who are your main characters?
What do they want?

ACT II: Who or what will stand in the way of your characters goals or desire for happiness?
What do opposing forces want?
What is the conflict?
What is the climax?

ACT III: What unanswered questions remain that need to be answered?
What happens to characters?
How does the story end?

Shots, Scenes & Sequences

BREAKING YOUR SCRIPT INTO SMALLER UNITS

After dividing your story into three basic acts, you are then ready to break your story into smaller units.

SHOTS

The smallest unit of action your script can be reduced to is The Shot. A shot is a single segment of film. The shot lasts from the moment you begin shooting to the moment you stop.

A shot might be a car travelling down a highway, or a reaction shot of one character listening to another.

A shot combined with other shots is then made into a scene.

SCENES

A scene is a unified action occurring at a single time and place. It may consist of a single shot, but usually it is a group of shots.

Like the screenplay in which they are contained, scenes also have beginnings and middles and ends.

An excellent example of a memorable scene from a film is the Cantina scene from *Star Wars*. This scene is composed of numerous shots of unusual creatures listening to an equally unusual jazz quartet.

A scene has a central idea. In itself, it tells only one part of your overall story. If you change time and place, you begin a new scene.

SEQUENCES

When a series of scenes are linked together and unified by a single idea, a sequence is developed.

A good example of a sequence is in *Rocky*, where the main character goes through his training routine to prepare for his big fight. We see numerous scenes of Rocky at different times in different places getting in shape. The training scenes considered as a whole make a sequence.

As with individual scenes, sequences also have beginnings, middles and ends.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a shot?
2. What is a scene?
3. What is a sequence?

ASSIGNMENT

Determining Shots, Scenes and Sequences

Objective: To identify shots, scenes and sequences.

Procedure: Select a segment of a film and analyze it. Determine how many shots are in the segment. How many scenes? How many sequences?

A NEW SCENE IS REQUIRED WHEN YOU CHANGE EITHER TIME OR PLACE

LOVELY STORY — DIVISION OF SCENES

FADE IN

Scene I EXT. Oliver in park thinking back

II INT. Radcliff Library
Ollie selects a book
Jenni gives him a hard time
Ollie asks Jenni out

III INT. Coffee Shop
Jenni and Ollie getting to know each other

IV INT. Ollie's House
Lying on couch watching television
Picks up phone and calls Jenni

V INT. Jenni's House
Jenni talks to Ollie on phone

VI EXT. Various city and road scenes on the way to Ollie's parents

VII INT. Ollie's parents house
Sitting at table discussing Jenni

VIII INT. Phil's Bakery
Phil and Jenni talk about Ollie's marriage proposal

IX INT. Jenni's Place
Ollie and Jenni studying and talk about future

X MONTAGE: EXT/INT
Various shots of Ollie and Jenni having fun, marriage, etc.

XI INT. Jenni's Place
Jenni coughing

XII INT. Jenni's Place
Ollie calls doctor

XIII INT. Hospital
Doctor and Ollie talk

XIV INT. Jenni's Hospital Room
Ollie and Jenni talk and hold each other
Jenni dies

XV EXT. Gravesite
Ollie looks at Jenni's grave
Walks Away
FADE OUT

Reversals

KEEPING THINGS INTERESTING

When we divided our screenplay into three acts, we ended Acts I and II with unexpected incidents.

These unexpected incidents are called *reversals* because they suddenly alter the direction of your story. Reversals are sometimes referred to as plot points.

Regardless of their name, they are necessary because they provide situations that lead to the conflict and resolution of your story.

Reversals disrupt the normal flow of events.

In *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* life on Earth is fine until aliens arrive and alter the everyday lives of the main characters.

In *Star Wars* Luke Skywalker is an easy going young man with very few cares in life until the Empire savagely destroys his family and home.

In *Footloose* a boy moves to a new town only to discover that dancing and listening to rock 'n roll music aren't allowed.

In each of these films an incident happens that suddenly changes the direction of the story. Characters are plunged into difficult situations. If these incidents (reversals) had not occurred, what would have happened in the stories? NOTHING! Life would have gone on without disruption.

REVERSAL #2

At the end of Act II another reversal occurs that leads to the climax of the story.

Only when the main conflict comes to a sudden end can the climax of your story occur.

What happens that changes the situation and brings the story to an end?

Is the Empire temporarily defeated?

Does the city council give in and allow a dance?

Do the aliens agree to meet with the Earthlings?

Your story generally turns in another direction when your main characters overcome the obstacles that stand in their way.

In LOVELY STORY, although Jenni's illness is a new and unexpected situation for Oliver, her death basically resolves the conflict between Oliver and his family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a reversal?
2. What would happen if a story did not contain reversals?
3. What is another name for a reversal?
4. Why are reversals important?

ASSIGNMENT #1

Identifying Reversals

Objective: To discover the key points (reversals) in a film.

Procedure: Select a film that you have seen and try to determine where the turning points (reversals) are.

Tip: A film may have several turning points. In this assignment, try to determine the major reversals that occur at the end of Acts I and II.

Evaluation: Share your findings with the class.

ASSIGNMENT #2

Plotting Reversals

Objective: To demonstrate the reversal technique in your writing

Procedure: In your own screenplay, write in a major reversal at the ends of Act I and II.

Evaluation: Share your reversals with the class. Determine if your reversals send your story off into a new direction.

Conflict and Character

CREATING DIFFICULTIES FOR INTERESTING PEOPLE

Central to any work of fiction is the element of *conflict.* If conflict is absent from your script, then nothing really important is going to happen. Characters go on with their everyday lives and nothing stands in their way of achieving happiness and reaching their goals.

Would Luke Skywalker have had any reason to declare war on the Empire if his family and home had not been destroyed?

Would the residents of quiet and peaceful Amity Island have been upset if JAWS had not come to their town?

Would Oliver and Jenny of *Love Story* have had any problems if Oliver's father had not disliked Jenny and not withheld his millions? (Jenny's illness is another complication, not the main conflict.)

And what about *The Karate Kid*? What would the story have been about if he hadn't gotten beaten up and pushed around?

As you can see, conflict forms the dramatic basis of each of these stories. Something or someone stands in the way of each of these characters attempts to achieve happiness and reach their goals.

Whether your characters achieve happiness and reach their goals is up to you. The important thing is that you must involve them in a conflict of some kind.

CONFLICTS

Man vs. Man

Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader.

Man vs. Society

Stallone against the system in *First Blood.*

Man vs. Nature

Surviving the wilderness in *Never Cry Wolf.*

Man vs. Himself

Rocky Balboa trying to become what he is capable of becoming.

Man vs. Animals

Fishing for JAWS.

CHARACTER

Equally as important as conflict in your stories is the element of character.

A well-crafted script doesn't just contain people; it contains characters who are real, often likeable, sometimes despicable, and always interesting.

A poorly written script is one in which cardboard figures are secondary to the action of the story. Typically these stories feature interesting cars driven by boring people.

Whether good guys or bad guys, the characters in your scripts should be interesting. Because characters are the ones required to move your story forward, don't let your audience down by creating one dimensional and unappealing characters.

When constructing your script, think about the characters who will speak the lines you've written. What are they like? Where do they come from? How do they walk? How do they talk? Are they quiet? Aggressive? Tough? Weak?

A good way to understand character is to think about some of the characters you've seen in movies and on television. Because they *are* characters, they are memorable.

Hawkeye Pierce — Cut up and chief trouble maker of the 4077th.

Jenny Cavalleri — Smart aleck librarian of *Love Story.*

James Bond — Suave and debonair secret agent.

Rocky Balboa — Lovable tough guy heavyweight champion.

Han Solo — Intergallactic pilot.

Alexis Carrington — The woman you love to hate on *Dynasty.*

J.R. Ewing — The rottenest oilman of all.

Although the foregoing characters are created by and played by professionals, you can create characters that are both interesting and entertaining.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is conflict central to all fiction?
2. Can you think of any stories without conflict?
3. Can you think of other films that can serve as examples of each type of conflict?
4. Are there other types of conflict not mentioned?
5. Why is character an important element of the scriptwriting process?
6. Can you think of other strong and memorable movie and television characters?

ASSIGNMENT #1

Adding Conflict and Character to Scripts

Objective: To develop the elements of conflict and character within your scripts.

Procedure: Evaluate your story so far. Who are your characters? What do they want? What are they striving for? Who or what will stand in their way? What is the main conflict of the story?

ASSIGNMENT #2

Identifying Conflict

Objective: To determine the conflict in a film or television program.

Procedure: View a film or television program and determine the nature of the conflict. What was the main conflict? Were there other conflicts? Who was the main conflict between? Who were the lesser conflicts between? How was each resolved?

Putting It All Together

PRODUCING A WELL-CRAFTED SCRIPT

Screenplay formats differ between authors. Some authors suggest you number your scenes and major shots, while others are opposed to using numbers.

Whether you choose the storyboard format or written script, the final form in which your script appears should be what works best for you.

Even though your script is really not a shooting script, you can shoot from it and are encouraged to do so. Shooting scripts are finely detailed in regards to camera angle, placement, and composition. As you gain more experience, you may want to include more of the technical apsects of video movie making in your scripts.

At this point you are ready to produce a script that incorporates all of the elements discussed up to this point.

REVIEW OF THE SCRIPTWRITING PROCESS

1. Develop an idea.
2. Write a scenario.
3. Divide your story into three basic acts.
4. Begin writing your script by breaking down each act into specific scenes and sequences.
5. Write dialogue and describe the action of each scene.
6. Revise as necessary.
7. Produce a final draft.

ASSIGNMENT

Writing a Screenplay

Objective: To produce a ten to fifteen page screenplay capable of being filmed by video productions students.

Procedure: Follow the steps outlined below.

1. Develop an idea capable of being filmed by you in your school. (Remember where you are and what facilities are available to you. Be realistic about what you can accomplish.)
2. Develop a scenario from your idea that outlines when and where your story takes place, who your major characters are, and what will happen. (Remember not to overlook the importance of real characters. For a video story to work, it should contain characters that are real and likeable.)
3. Divide your story into acts. Determine what will happen in each act and what events will suddenly change the direction of your story. (Don't overlook the importance of reversals and conflict in your story.)
4. Break your acts into scenes and sequences.
5. Script your dialogue and describe the action of each scene.
6. When complete, revise as necessary.
7. Share your final draft with class.

INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION CENTER

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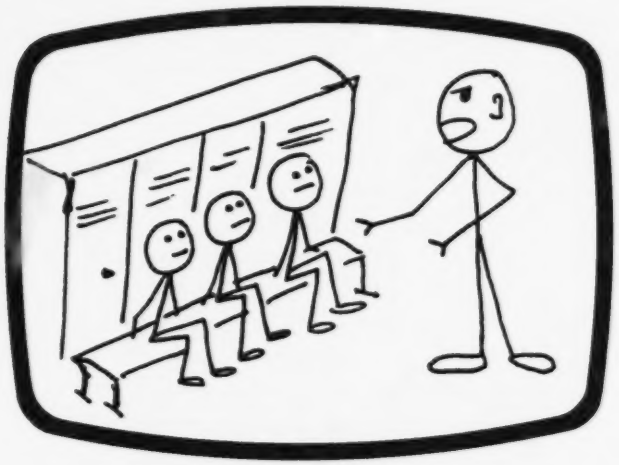
CLIENT:

TITLE: NIGHT OF THE BIG GAME

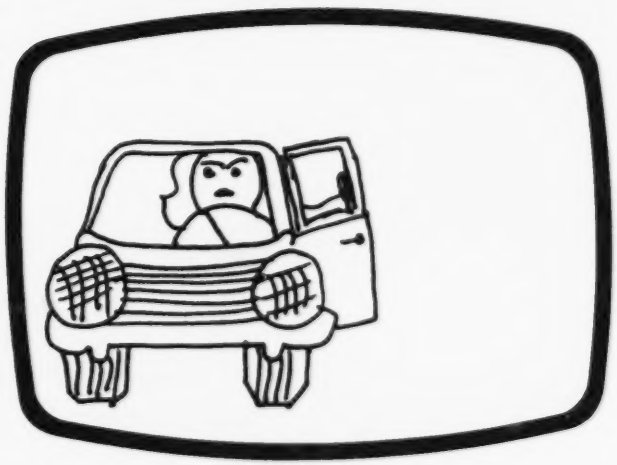
JOB NO:



#1 INT- J.H.S. LOCKER ROOM
COACH PHILLIPS TALKING TO PLAYERS

(AUDIO) "I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU GUYS HOW IMPORTANT THIS GAME IS."

(AUDIO) "WE'RE EITHER GOING TO LEAVE HERE CHAMPIONS, OR WE'RE GOING TO BE SECOND."



#2 CHEERLEADER SUSIE RUSHES TO G/F

(MUSIC OVER)

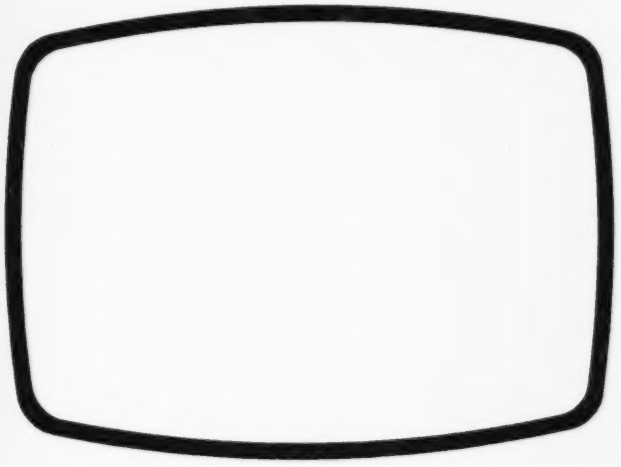
INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION CENTER

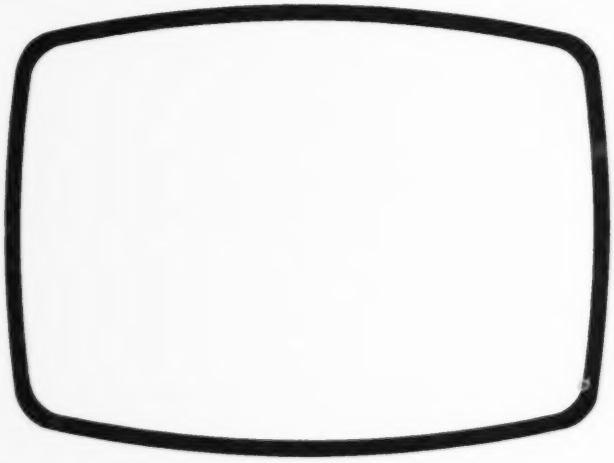
DATE: _____

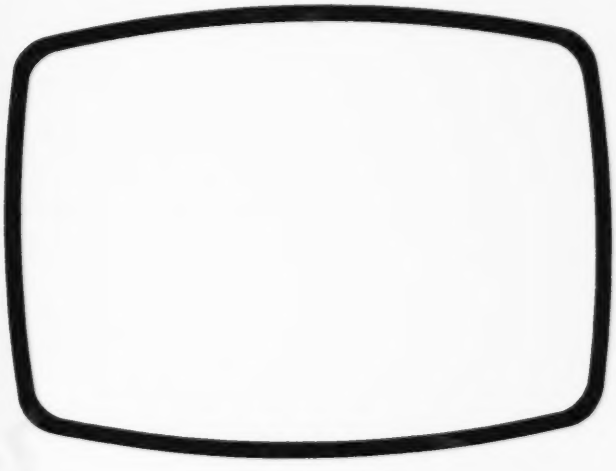
CLIENT: _____

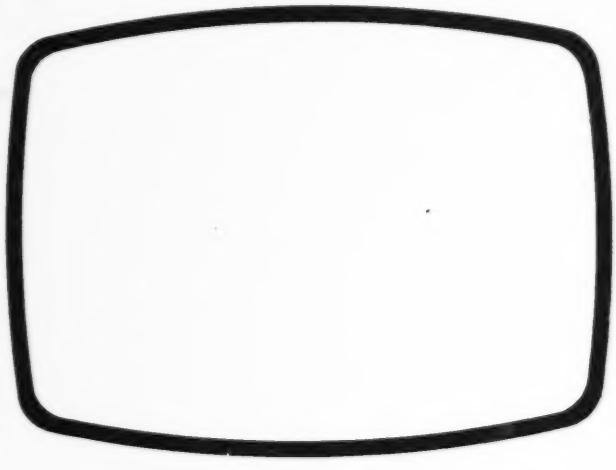
TITLE: _____

JOB NO: _____









3. Production

Equipment Checkout

KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT

Before any shooting takes place, you should thoroughly familiarize yourself with the equipment you will be using. This procedure should include reading the instruction and operations manuals carefully, handling the equipment, becoming familiar with all equipment features and functions, equipment set up and take down procedures, and equipment operation.

Equipment Checklist

ASSIGNMENT

Equipment Checkout

Objective: To become familiar with the features and operations of the equipment you'll be using.

Procedure: Examine each piece of equipment. Note all features. Set up system in order to learn its operation.

Use the following checklist as a guide. (Depending on your equipment, some features listed here may not be included with your system.)

VIDEO CAMERA

- Lens system
  - focusing ring (manual focus or auto focus)
  - zoom (automatic or manual)
  - macro (extreme close up)
  - iris (manual and automatic)
  - lens hood
  - lens cover
  - white balance (automatic or manual)
  - automatic gain control
  - color adjustment/fade out control
- Viewfinder
  - playback through viewfinder
  - indicator lights for record, play, light levels
- Pause/Record Control
- Microphone
- Character Generator

VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER

- Eject Button
- Cassette Holder
- Stop Button
- Play Button
- Record Button
- Pause/Still Control
- On/Off Switch
- Scan/Search Control
- Audio Dub Control
- Counter Reset
- Tape Counter
- Counter Memory Switch
- Battery Indicator
- Dew Indicator (Moisture Control)
- Vertical Lock Adjuster
- Fast Forward
- Rewind
- Tracking Control
- Remote Control Jack
- Microphone Input
- Audio Out
- Video Output Connector
- Video Input Connector
- RF Output Connector
- AC Adaptor Connector
- Camera Input Terminal
- Battery Compartment
- Camera Remote Switch

AC ADAPTOR/BATTERY RECHARGER

- VCR Connector
- On/Off Switch
- Charging Indicator
- Battery Compartment

BATTERY

MONITOR

- On/Off Switch
- Color Controls
- Horizontal/Vertical Hold Controls
- Contrast
- Sharpness/Detail Controls
- Video Input
- Video Output
- Audio Input
- Audio Output
- Earphone Jack
- Channel/VTR Selection
- RF Output/Input

CABLES AND CONNECTORS

- All video and audio cables and connectors should be thoroughly examined for pin connector patterns.

TRIPOD

- Leg extensions
- Raising and lowering tripod
- Pan and tilt controls

Equipment Care

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

In order to keep your equipment operating, the following procedures should be observed.

VIDEO CAMERA

1. Replace lens cap when camera is not in use.
2. Avoid pointing camera at a direct light source.
3. Handle and transport camera with care.
4. Store camera when not in use to keep dust from collecting on it.
5. Avoid getting camera wet.

VCR

1. Make sure cassette carrier is closed when VCR is not in use.
2. Store in dust free area when not in use.
3. Don't block louvres which enable the equipment to get air.
4. Avoid getting equipment wet.
5. Clean heads periodically.
6. Keep food and drink away from VCR.
7. Handle and transport with care.

CABLES

1. Avoid crimping cables and damaging connectors.

MONITOR

1. Handle and transport with care.
2. Avoid overexposure to dusty conditions.

BATTERIES

1. Store properly.
2. Recharge after every use.

LIGHTS

1. Store properly.
2. Never handle bulbs with bare hands.
3. Don't store until instruments are completely cool.

MICROPHONES

1. Store in dust free area when not in use.
2. Use wind socks when outside.
3. Avoid unnecessary shocks.
4. Keep extra batteries on hand.

VIDEOTAPES

1. Tapes should always be put back in storage cases after use.
2. Store tapes vertically, not on their sides.
3. Store in a cool and dry place. Avoid contact with sources of heat and exposure to direct sunlight.
4. Do not store tapes near equipment that can produce a magnetic field. Magnetic fields can erase tapes.
5. Avoid dropping tape and exposing to shock and impact.
6. Rewind tape after each use.
7. Do not touch tape surface, or try to remove tape from cassette, or splice tape.
8. Allow tape to adjust to inside temperatures before using after being exposed to the cold.
9. Knock out tape tab on side of cassette if tape is not to be recorded on again.
10. To reuse a tape with the tab removed, cover knockout space with a small strip of masking or scotch tape. Make sure tape does not come in contact with recording surfaces.

11. Mark your tapes. Use gummed labels to identify tape.
12. Log your tapes. Make a log sheet that identifies each shot on your tape. Use the recorder tape counter to log footage.

    Example:

    Counter Number: 000 — Ext. of School
    310 — Driver's Ed. Students
    990 — Basketball Practice
13. Keep your tape logs filed for later reference.
14. Keep extra tapes on hand.

EQUIPMENT MANUALS

Review equipment manuals for instructions and operations procedures. Review sections on troubleshooting when problems arise. Keep manuals filed for handy reference.

Shooting Techniques

THE CAMERA SHOT IS A WAY OF MAKING A STATEMENT

Like a painting that is filled with a variety of colors and textures, videos are filled with a variety of camera shots that enhance the overall effect of the finished product.

Visually a video may be dull and uninteresting, or it may be daring and bold and filled with well thought out camera shots that add interest and excitement.

Shots may be close up or long shots. The camera may be mounted on a tripod or it may be handheld.

Whatever shooting technique is chosen, the videomaker must know beforehand what kind of shot is wanted and why.

Shots convey information to an audience. Shots make a statement. How an audience responds to a particular segment of video is often dependent on the shooting technique used.

Typically videos and films begin with *long shots* to orient the viewer and set the scene of the action and the location of the story. This is called an establishing shot.

In order to introduce characters to an audience, a videomaker will most likely introduce them with medium shots or close ups. The videomaker chooses to involve the audience with the characters by bringing them closer together through the use of medium and close up shots.

Videomakers can manipulate an audience by forcing them to get closer to a character or further away by the type of shot that is selected.

In the case of a couple who is supposed to care for each other, the use of the medium and close up shots compel the audience to become involved with the characters. If a long shot was chosen, then the audience would remain apart from the characters and feel detached.

It is up to the videomaker to decide what feeling or response is wanted from the audience.

The importance of variety of shooting techniques cannot be overstated. Beginning videomakers often maintain too much distance between their subjects and the cameras. The overuse of the long shot works against the videomaker by keeping the viewer detached and removed from the action and the characters.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain how camera shots make a statement.
2. Why must a videomaker know what shots are wanted?
3. Why are medium and close up shots best for introducing characters?
4. Why is a variety of shots desirable?

Camera Shots

GIVING IT YOUR BEST SHOT

Long Shot - The long shot is also known as an establishing shot. It is used to establish a scene and location. Characters are usually seen from head to toe.

Medium Shot - Characters are seen from the waist up.

Close Up - Characters are seen from the shoulders up.

Extreme Close Up - The subject of the shot may be a character's eyes, nose, mouth. Extreme Close Ups are used to view subject matter in close detail.

Point of View - The camera appears to view the action through the eyes of a character. (This technique is most effective when the camera is handheld and moving.)

Reverse Angle - Opposite of the point of view. Camera now becomes the eyes of another person.

Over the Shoulder - The camera is positioned behind and to the side of a subject. The impression is that we are actually looking over someone's shoulder.

Two Shot - A shot of two people in a scene. (Close the distance between them. If your actors observe normal spatial relationships, that distance will appear too great on screen. Have them stand close together, even if it seems awkard to your performers.)

Pan - The camera follows the horizon from side to side.

Tilt - The camera is tilted vertically from floor to ceiling or opposite.

Moving - A stationary camera follows the action of the scene.

Trucking/Tracking - The camera travels with the action of the scene. (Camera may be handheld or transported on a dolly or in a vehicle.)

Dolly In/Dolly Out - Camera moves toward or away from a subject. (Camera usually mounted on a dolly or cart.)

Zoom In/Zoom Out - Camera lens is used to go from a long shot to a closer shot or opposite.

Insert - A close up of material to be inserted into the scene. (Example: a business card, a scoreboard, speedometer.)

Low Angle - The camera is placed below the subject to create the impression of greater size.

High Angle - The camera is placed above the subject to create the impression of a smaller size.

DEMONSTRATING SHOT TECHNIQUES

OBJECTIVE: Students will demonstrate their understanding of the requirements of each shot by shooting an example of each shot listed.

PROCEDURE: Working in pairs, shoot an example of each of the following shots.

REMINDER:
Check for focus.
Check for excessive or distracting movement.
Check for adequate lighting.
Check for composition of shot.
Check to make sure camera is not on pause.

CHECK OFF EACH SHOT AS YOU COMPLETE IT:

_____ 1. Long Shot (LS)
_____ 2. Medium Shot (MS)
_____ 3. Close Up (CU)
_____ 4. Extreme Close Up (ECU)
_____ 5. Point of View (POV)
_____ 6. Over the Shoulder (OS)
_____ 7. Two Shot
_____ 8. Pan
_____ 9. Tilt
_____ 10. Moving
_____ 11. Tracking
_____ 12. Dolly In/Out
_____ 13. Zoom In/Out
_____ 14. Insert
_____ 15. Reverse Angle
_____ 16. Low Angle
_____ 17. High Angle

EVALUATION: Review each of your shots.
Reshoot if necessary.

In-Camera Editing

EDITING WITHOUT AN EDITING SYSTEM

By planning carefully, you can complete an edited video without using an editing system.

The technique is called *in-camera editing*. The technique requires that you do your editing within the camera itself.

Unlike out of camera editing, in-camera editing requires you to shoot each scene/shot in the order it occurs in the script.

For beginners, in-camera editing is an excellent technique for learning the basics of story telling and shooting and cutting techniques.

EDITING IN-CAMERA

In-camera editing begins with a complete and detailed script. This is necessary since shots and scenes cannot be cut in later. You must be able to visualize each shot, including changes in camera position within a scene to assure proper continuity.

Once you have planned your shot, you are then ready to shoot what you need. After the shot is completed you may choose to stop your recorder or temporarily put it in the pause mode for the next shot. Remember, you are shooting in the order scenes occur.

Each successive shot will be a straight cut from the previous shot, allowing for no blank tape in between.

Once you have completed shooting all of your scenes, your video is then ready to be viewed, since it is already edited.

USING THE PAUSE MODE

The pause control on your recorder can be useful if you are able to move from shooting one scene to the next quickly. As a rule, it is not wise to leave your recorder on pause for more than 30 seconds, as it may produce excessive head and tape wear. Although the tape is not moving when the recorder is in the pause mode, the video heads themselves continue to turn and make contact with the tape. Since both the tape and heads continue to experience some wear, the overall life of both is reduced.

PAUSE OVERRIDE

As a guard against damage to the VCR, some recording units feature a pause override which instructs the VCR to disengage the pause/play-record mode if the unit has been placed on pause too long. When the override engages, the VCR will return to its normal stop position. You should check to see if your system has a pause override, otherwise you may not be recording when you think you are.

STOPPING THE VCR

If you decide to stop your recorder after shooting each scene, remember to review the footage you just completed before going on to your next shot.

VCR tape rollback may cause you to lose part of your previous shot if you fail to start the recorder in the proper place for the next shot.

When a VCR stops, the tape does not freeze in the position it is stopped in. The tape may advance or rewind a few frames when the recorder is stopped and then started again. (Some newer recorders feature a freeze feature.)

A good method for locating the exact spot where you wish to begin recording again is by playing back your footage through the viewfinder on the camera and then putting your recorder on pause when you locate the exact spot where you wish to add your next shot. With the recorder on pause you can then engage the play-record function and be ready to shoot again.

QUALITY

In-camera editing is not intended to take the place of out of camera editing. It will not produce results as satisfying as working with a complete editing system. Despite your best efforts, your final product will not be a technical marvel. Most likely you will notice some scenes jump and note lines resembling rainbows (glitches) between many of your shots.

The jumpiness is caused by mismatched shots (jump cuts) and the rainbow-like lines occur when the recorder is stopped and started. Since it takes a few seconds for a recorder to reach its proper recording speed, the lines are created by the inferior signal that is generated when the tape has yet to come up to full speed.

MODIFY YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Since you know that in-camera editing is inferior to out of camera editing, you can now forget about editing quality and view your video in terms of its ability to tell a story and evaluate the shooting techniques used.

Once you have mastered the fundamentals of shooting and story telling, you'll be ready for work with an out of camera editing system.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does in-camera editing differ from out of camera?
2. What are some pitfalls associated with in-camera editing?
3. How can in-camera editing be a useful learning tool?

ASSIGNMENT #1

Write and shoot a sixty second silent story using in-camera editing.

Objective: Demonstrate the technique of in-camera editing.

Procedure:
1. Write a script that tells a story in approximately sixty seconds.
2. Divide your script into scenes.
3. Determine the shots required for each scene.
4. Shoot script chronologically.
5. Review and evaluate.

Evaluation: Does video tell a coherent story?
Were effective shooting techniques used?
Where did video succeed well?
What aspects require improvement?

Reminder: Review previous shot to determine exact spot on tape needed for next shot. There should be no blank tape between shots.

ASSIGNMENT #2

Write and shoot a sixty second story with dialogue using in-camera editing.

Objective: Demonstrate in-camera editing of sound as well as video.

Procedure:
1. Write a script with dialogue that tells a story in approximately sixty seconds.
2. Divide your script into scenes.
3. Determine the shots required for each scene.
4. Film script chronologically.
5. Review and evaluate.

Evaluation: Does video tell a coherent story?
Was sound used effectively?
Were effective camera techniques used?
Where did video succeed?
In what ways could your video be improved?
Rate the performances of your cast.

Reminder: Make sure your performers speak up.

Lighting

EFFECTIVE LIGHTING DOES NOT DRAW ATTENTION TO ITSELF

Adequate lighting is essential for a satisfactory video.

Although different cameras respond differently under different lighting conditions, proper illumination is essential, regardless of the equipment used.

Underlighting will provide dull and murky footage.

Overlighting frequently results in hot spots, glare and unwanted reflections.

In order to achieve effective lighting, the videomaker must control the overall illumination of a scene.

A good way to begin working with lighting is by using the Three Point Lighting Set Up. This method is essentially the same one portrait photographers use.

A KEY LIGHT is placed to the front and to the side of the subject. The KEY provides the majority of overall illumination.

To the front and other side of the subject a FILL LIGHT is placed. The FILL is somewhat lower in intensity and helps reduce the harsh shadows created by the KEY.

Above and behind the subject is what is known as the BACKLIGHT. The backlight separates the subject from the background and illuminates the hair and shoulders of the subject.

LIGHTING FOR EFFECT

Some scenes require special lighting. For example, your scene may require subdued lighting to create an atmosphere of romance, lighting to suggest night, or lighting to suggest suspense and mystery.

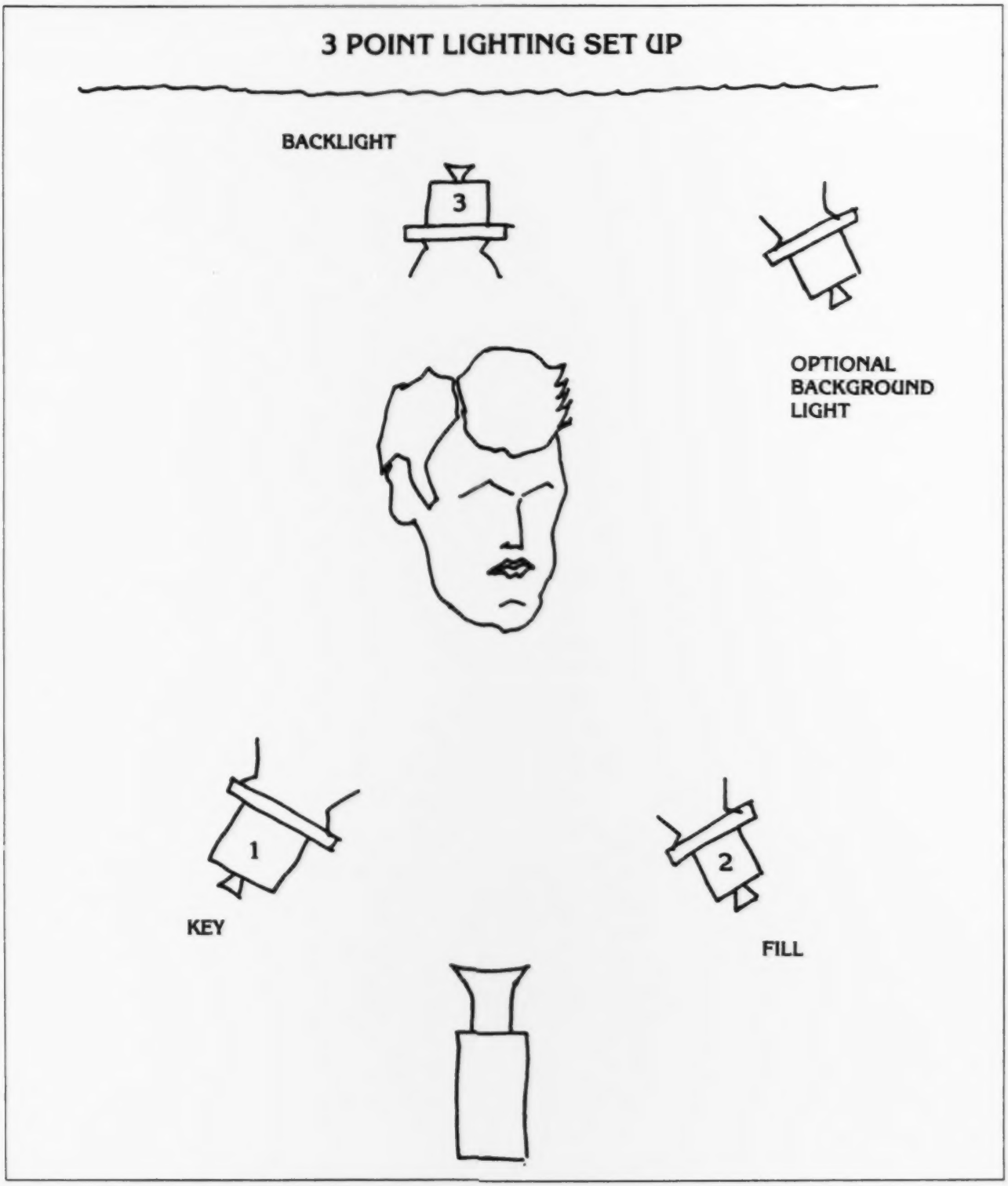
Softer and less harsh lighting can be created by using diffusion filters over the lighting instru-

ments. Diffusion filters are frosted filters that soften the light.

Night effects can be created by using only one light, thereby incorporating shadows, or by using blue filters.

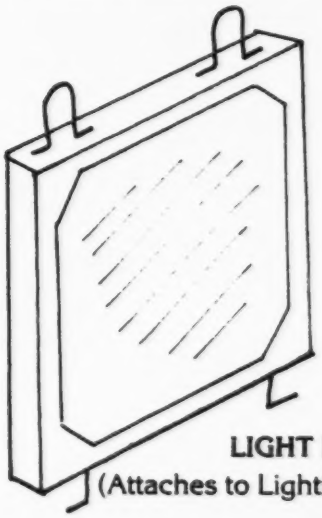
Other color filters can create varying effects, such as those found in science fiction films, dance and club lighting, or dream sequences.

3 POINT LIGHTING SET UP



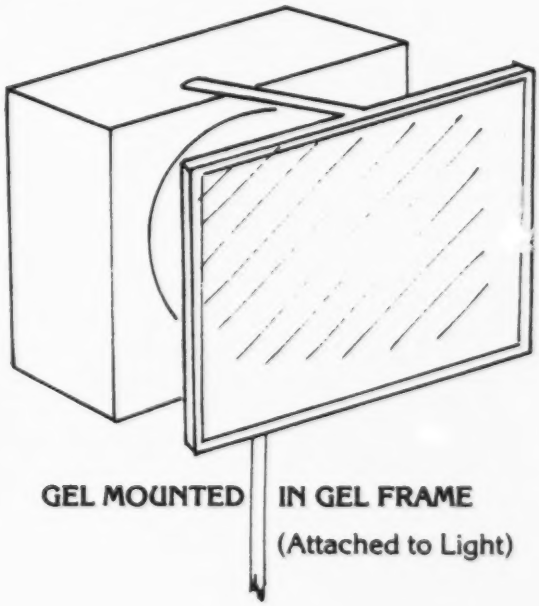
LIGHTING ACCESSORIES

***Filters** (Scrims and diffusion glass)* · Because stark white light is not always desired when shooting video, attachments are available with most lighting kits that can be used to filter and diffuse the light generated by lighting instruments. These attachments help soften the intensity and harshness of light.



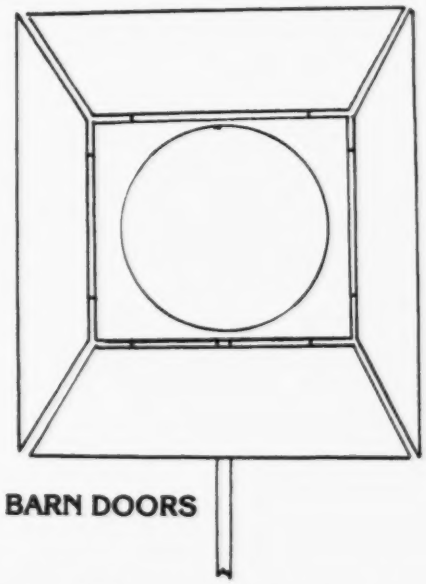
LIGHT FILTER
(Attaches to Lighting Instrument)

Gels · Transparent colored gels are available to create color when the situation calls for it. Unlike a lens filter which usually allows for only one color, each lighting instrument can be fitted with a different colored gel. Frosted gels are also available to help soften the light directed toward the subject.



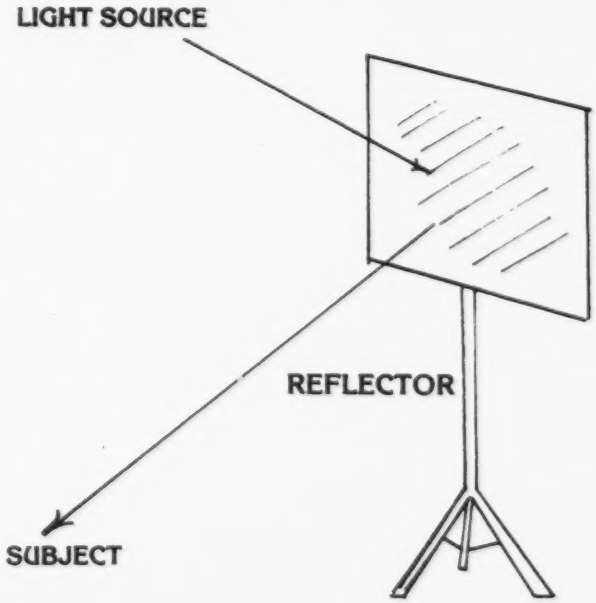
GEL MOUNTED IN GEL FRAME
(Attached to Light)

Barn Doors · Barn doors are lighting attachments that swing open and closed like miniature window shutters and allow you to shape the beam of light that is generated by the lighting instrument. When you don't require as much light as the instrument gives off, you can shutter out part of the overall illumination.



BARN DOORS

Reflectors · Reflectors allow you to bounce light from a lighting source to your subject. They may be used both inside and outside. Reflectors are tin or aluminum sheets. A piece of cardboard covered with aluminum foil will also serve as a reflector. Outside reflectors are used to direct sunlight onto your subject.



SOME BRIGHT IDEAS

Lighting equipment gets extremely hot during usage. Crew members should remember to wear gloves when handling lighting instruments during and immediately after use.

NEVER touch a light bulb with bare fingers. Oils are transferred from the fingers to the bulb, which can cause the bulb to overheat and explode when illuminated.

Double check for shadows on your set. Microphones, equipment and crew members can all create unwanted shadows.

When working outside, remember to carry a reflector with you.

Whenever possible, use a monitor to view your light to determine if appropriate.

When studying other videos and films, pay attention to the lighting. Try to determine where the main source of light is located. Check for overall illumination and suggestion of mood. Look for separation between subject and background.

Don't underestimate the need for good lighting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the names of the three lights used in the 3 point lighting set up?
2. What does each light do?
3. What is the purpose of a reflector?
4. How can filters and gels be used to create different effects?

ASSIGNMENT #1

Using the 3 Point System to Light

Objective: Demonstrate effective lighting techniques.

Procedure: Using a key light, fill light and back light illuminate a simple scene such as a person sitting in a chair. Experiment with different positions and distances from subject until an adequate illumination level is achieved.

Record your scene for approximately thirty seconds.

Evaluation: How effective is your lighting set up?
What difficulties did you encounter (if any) in getting adequate illumination?

ASSIGNMENT #2

Lighting for Suspense

Objective: Demonstrate techniques that create a special mood.

Procedure: Select an area of your classroom or somewhere else within the school to be lit for a suspense scene.

Set your lights in such a way that shadows play an important role in your shot.

Instruct a performer to walk or creep through the scene.

Evaluation: Does the lighting suggest a mood?
Does it imply suspense?
With the inclusion of a performer, does it still appear suspenseful?
What other ways can mood and suspense lighting be achieved?

ASSIGNMENT #3

Using Reflectors

Objective: Demonstrate illumination techniques outside.

Procedure: Shoot a short improvised scene outside, using natural daylight. Use a reflector to direct sunlight or daylight onto your subjects — shoot.

Repeat: This time, don't use reflectors. Compare.

Evaluation: How do the two scenes compare?
Was the reflector effective?
Why or why not?
Will reflectors work in ordinary daylight or is sun necessary?

Microphones

SOUND ADVICE

A major problem beginning videomakers face is that of getting adequate sound.

Although most video cameras feature a built-in shotgun extension microphone, these often prove ineffective in many recording situations. Situations that require the camera to be placed a long way from the subject by necessity also place the built-in microphone far away, which renders it that much less effective. These omnidirectional microphones are subject to picking up unwanted air flow, which produces a hollow or hissing sound on tape.

The best overall sound is produced when the microphone is placed close to the subject.

When possible, extension microphones should be used. Extension microphones will allow you to wire your subject for sound without having to bring the camera in closer.

During shooting, a crew member should monitor the sound by wearing headphones that are plugged into the earphone/headphones jack of the VCR. This procedure can save a lot of retake time.

An excellent solution to sound problems is using a lapel microphone. These inexpensive, battery operated microphones produce excellent results. Because they can be discretely placed on the subject's clothing, problems with air flow are virtually eliminated, thus the overall quality of the sound is enhanced.

When shooting outside, a wind sock should be used to cover the microphone to reduce problems with wind noise.

AUDIO DUBBING

Most VCR's feature what is known as the audio dub. This device will allow you to record new sound onto your videotape without erasing the video track.

To make an audio dub you plug a microphone into your VCR and then press the audio dub button and play button. When audio dubbing, DO NOT PUSH RECORD.

Some VCR's feature two track dubbing that will allow you to lay down a voice track on one track and a music track on the other track.

Before attempting to audio dub refer to your instruction manual.

MICROPHONE PROS AND CONS

Boom Microphones - Boom microphones are usually suspended immediately above the performer. Although they are effective in that they allow the performer to move around, when they are moved in order to follow the performer, they often find their way into the shot itself. (This is a problem in many professional productions.)

Lapel Microphones - These little microphones produce excellent sound but restrict the performer's ability to move around.

Table Microphones - Table microphones are difficult to conceal and are subject to picking up floor vibrations and thumping, should the performer accidently kick the table with his foot.

Floor Microphones - Floor microphones are useful in close up situations, but become ineffective when the performer moves away. Air flow is also a problem as well as floor vibration.

Camera Microphones - Camera microphones are most effective in situations where the camera is placed close to the subject. Distance creates air flow problems.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some advantages and disadvantages of microphones?
2. What is air flow and why is it a problem?
3. What is a good way to reduce outside wind noise?
4. When is a microphone most effective?

ASSIGNMENT #1

Comparing Microphones

Objective: Understanding the differences in microphones.

Procedure: Record a student reading a short piece of copy.
Repeat using a different microphone.
Repeat until all microphones have been used.

Evaluate: Which microphone gave the best sound?
Which microphones were superior? Why?
Can the microphone determined best be used for all recording situations? Does it have limitations? What are they?

ASSIGNMENT #2

Recording Sound

Objective: Determining placement of microphones in acting scenes.

Procedure: Select a microphone you think is best suited for recording sound in a short scene.

Have your actors perform the scene for recording.

Place your microphones in a position best suited for the scene.

Evaluation: How effective was the microphone?
Was it too close? Too far away?
Did the mike have any limitations? If so , what are they?
Was incidental air noise noticeable?

ASSIGNMENT #3

Using Sound During an Interview

Objective: Learning the importance of microphone placement for interviews.

Procedure: Arrange to interview a student or teacher.

Select a microphone you feel best suited for occasion.

Record interview.

Evaluate: Was sound effective?
Could it have been improved? If yes, how?

ASSIGNMENT #4

Doing a Voice Over

Objective: Learning to evaluate microphones for voice overs.

Procedure: Select a piece of video footage you have shot and dub your voice over the existing audio track.

Evaluate: Did the microphone produce effective results?
Were you too close or too far away?
How did you sound?

Lights - Camera - Action

Lights, action, camera is such a well-known phrase, most people aren't aware that it is actually incorrect.

The actual phrase is CAMERA, SPEED, ACTION.

The phrase is a command for the camera to begin rolling. When the camera has reached its proper filming speed, then action is called for the performers to begin.

By observing this simple procedure, you can save yourself a lot of grief later on as you begin to shoot footage that is to be edited out of camera.

During the lesson on in-camera editing, we discussed the problem of VCR rollback. Rollback occurs when a VCR is turned off and then turned on again. The tape actually rewinds a second or two. Unless you control for rollback, you could lose valuable footage.

Once you begin to shoot footage intended to be edited out of camera, rollback presents another problem.

As you'll learn when you begin to edit, the editing system requires that each scene to be edited have at least five seconds of lead-in footage. That means that the editing system will not accept any footage that does not have a minimum of five seconds of clean (glitch free) footage prior to the point you wish to make your edit.

To avoid losing good footage you want to save and to allow yourself plenty of lead-in time for your shots, you should observe these steps.

1. Before each shot, allow at least ten seconds of lead-in before you call action. This will allow your recorder plenty of time to come up to speed, put more distance between the glitch that is created when you begin recording, and will provide enough lead-in footage for the editing process to take place.
2. When the shot is completed, allow your recorder to run a couple of seconds longer. By getting into this habit you will avoid the risk of cutting a scene too short.
3. Before you begin to shoot your next scene, fast forward the recorder far enough to avoid the possibility of rolling back and recording over previous footage.

LEARN TO CALL ACTION AND CUT

By getting into the habit of calling ACTION when you are ready for a scene to begin, everyone involved in filming will immediately understand that the scene is ready to roll.

Calling ACTION is far superior to calling out, *okay, begin, start, all right,* etc.

When the scene is over or needs to be stopped, remember to call CUT.

ESSENTIAL REMINDERS

1. Let the tape roll at least ten seconds before calling action.
2. Call ACTION.
3. Allow a few extra seconds of tape to roll by before calling CUT!
4. Fast forward tape to avoid recording over needed footage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by camera, speed, action?
2. Why is rollback a problem?
3. Why allow for lead-in footage and additional end footage?
4. Why is calling ACTION and CUT useful?

ASSIGNMENT

Calling Action and Cut

Objective: To become familiar with the commands for beginning and ending a shot.

Procedure: Set up a scene and work through the following steps.

1. Rehearse scene.
2. When ready to shoot, instruct VCR operator to roll tape. Allow for 10 seconds of lead-in.
3. Call ACTION when ready.
4. Call CUT a couple of seconds after shot finished.

Acting

THE CAMERA SEES EVERYTHING

Acting for film and video is different than acting on stage.

The stage requires performers to project their voices to the back of the theatre. Gestures must be big in order to be seen from the farthest seat. And make-up is used to make features stand out so all audience members can see the performers' faces.

With film and video everyone in the audience has a front row seat, since the camera can close the gap between the audience and the performers. As a result of this difference in distance, actors and actresses on screen are faced with a different set of acting requirements. Instead of projecting their voices and using broad gestures, they are asked to tone down what they do. Microphones can detect the subtlety of a swallow and cameras can easily catch a winking or twitching eye.

Screen performers must become more inward. They must work to achieve a naturalness on screen, instead of relying on the outward and often broadly played performances typically found on stage.

Acting on video is a matter of experience. You should take advantage of every opportunity to try your hand at video performing and then assess your performances.

For some the experience will be easy, and they will appear comfortable and natural. Other students will have to work harder, but everyone can learn to perform for video if they are willing.

As a starting point in learning to perform on video, you should begin by conversing naturally. Frown at the camera and then smile. Talk to the camera. Talk to other students. Laugh at the camera. Try to work through a full range of experiences and emotions. Continue working until the experience gets easier and becomes fun.

Underplaying is a frequent problem with beginning video performers. Underplaying occurs when a performer is so low key that his or her actions and voice are slow and emotionless.

Practice is the key to an effective video performance. A good performance is one that appears spontaneous and energetic and has a variety filled delivery.

Remember: avoid broad overplaying and emotionless underplaying.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the differences between acting on stage and acting on screen.
2. Explain how underplaying is as bad as overplaying.
3. What are some ways a beginning video performer might overcome some initial acting difficulties?

ASSIGNMENT #1

Improvising for the Camera

Objective: To demonstrate the acting techniques required of video performers.

Procedure: To improvise a scene means to perform it with very little rehearsal. This technique is frequently used by directors like Francis Ford Coppola who believes that improvisation can often add to a film and encourages actors to appear more relaxed and spontaneous.

Working either individually or with a partner, work out an idea for a short scene that tells a story, but don't write the dialogue. Improvise the dialogue once you are being taped.

Evaluate: How did you feel?
How do you look on film?
How do you sound?
Does the scene appear real?
Does the delivery sound natural?
Do the performers need to speak up?
Is vocal variety evident?
Do your performers speak with a monotone?

ASSIGNMENT #2

Memorizing a Scene for the Camera

Objective: To demonstrate acting techniques for video.

Procedure: Either write a scene or select a scene from a play or a script to memorize.

Once memorized, perform the scene on video.

Evaluation: How does this scene compare with the improvised scene?
Is one more effective than the other? Why?
What skills do you need to polish in order to be a successful performer?

The Interview

Interviews can be an effective technique for obtaining information on a particular subject. Most often interviews take place between two people. One person asks questions and the other person responds.

In some cases, the interviewer may ask the same question of several different individuals in order to obtain a variety of opinions on a given subject.

Interviews may be conducted in one of four ways.

FOUR INTERVIEW FORMATS

1. ***The Scripted Interview*** - The scripted interview involves writing both questions and answers ahead of time. This type of *staged* interview is used to get across specific and previously agreed upon information. It is a useful technique when factual information is to be presented. For example, if the topic of the interview was substance abuse, providing factual information about prevention and treatment would be important.
2. ***The Question and Answer Interview*** - This type of interview is the most common. The interviewer prepares questions ahead of time and asks them of the guest being interviewed. As a matter of courtesy, some interviewers allow the interviewee to see the questions in advance of the interview. This avoids putting the interviewee on the spot. Some interviewers do not allow the guest to see the questions in advance, thus keeping the interview spontaneous.
3. ***The Conversational Interview*** - This type of interview is sometimes referred to as the spontaneous interview. Here the interviewer familiarizes himself with the subject and briefly outlines some areas of discussion. Because specific questions have not been planned, the interviewer allows the interview to develop as a conversation. Each new direction the conversation moves in gives rise to new questions. The interviewer must be a good listener and be capable of steering the conversation with insightful questions.
4. ***The Multiple Interviewee Interview*** - The multiple interviewee interview allows the interviewer to ask one or more questions of a number of different people. This technique is similar to a poll in that a wide variety of opinions are expressed. The interview can be conducted in-studio, or people can be interviewed *on the street*, or wherever the camera is taken.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

A good interview begins by gathering as much information about your subject as you can. The more you know about your topic and the person being interviewed, the easier it will be to plan questions and conduct the interview.

Next you should determine your purpose. What is the reason for this interview?

A. Is the interview primarily a personality profile? (For example, are you interviewing an elder in your community to learn more about him or her as a person?)
B. Does your subject possess information of interest? Can he or she provide insight into your topic? (For instance, are you interview-

ing the school counselor to learn more about the subject of financial aid for college?)

C. Will several people be interviewed to find out their thoughts on a special topic? (Example: how do students feel about the activities offered in your school?)

When developing your questions, make sure you avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.

Script your format. Write an introduction to your program that establishes the reason for the interview. Your introduction should also include an introduction of your guest.

If needed, write transitions between questions. (Example: "Thank you. Let's talk for a moment about . . .")

Conclude with an appropriate summarization or concluding remarks and thanks.

PRODUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Create a comfortable and relaxed setting.
2. Determine seating arrangement. Decide if interviewer will appear on screen.
3. Rig your set for light and sound.
4. Rehearse (if able and necessary).
5. Tape.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name four types of interviews and explain each.
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
3. What are some ways to ensure that you'll get a good interview?

ASSIGNMENT

Producing a Videotaped Interview

Objective: To demonstrate the proper techniques of conducting and filming an interview.

Procedure: Select one of the four interview formats and plan an interview using the format you chose.

PREPRODUCTION

1. Select subject(s) to be interviewed.
2. Determine purpose of interview.
3. Research your subject.
4. Develop questions that can be asked without being answered with a yes or no.
5. Script your program.
   - Introduction
   - Questions
   - Transitions
   - Conclusions

PRODUCTION

1. Create a comfortable and relaxed setting.
2. Determine seating arrangement and if interviewer will be on or off screen.
3. Light set and wire for sound.
4. Rehearse.
5. Tape.

POSTPRODUCTION

1. If an in-camera editing exercise, your titles should be filmed before interview begins.

   If an out of camera edited program, titles and additional material may be added later.
2. Edit.
3. Show.
4. Evaluate.

Evaluation: Share your final production with the class. Evaluate in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Evaluate the written portion of your program in addition to the technical aspects.

SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

Conduct additional interviews using different formats.

Planning for Variety

GOING THE EXTRA DISTANCE

Equally as important as not having enough production time is not having enough time on tape.

Inexperienced videomakers sometimes make the mistake of undershooting. They assume that because they've got an hour of footage they've got more than enough to create an effective

video. Unless that hour of footage contains lots of variety, chances are additional footage will have to be shot.

If you end up with only three minutes worth of good footage for a four minute music video, you have a problem.

Remember you may only get one or two minutes worth of good footage out of an hour long shoot.

Trying to stretch footage is pointless. Instead of having lots of variety, your existing footage will be overused and boring. Scenes will run too long and your viewers will lose interest. It takes only a few seconds on screen before a scene begins to drag.

A single image held on screen for 5 seconds or longer can appear excessively long.

As you move into the unit on commercials, study commercial techniques before you begin shooting. Note how well time is compressed. Count the number of different shots used in a 30 second and 60 second commercial. Pay attention to the variety of shots and locations used.

WAYS TO ACHIEVE VARIETY IN YOUR SHOOTING

1. Always shoot more than you think you'll need. (Avoid the beginner's tendency to undershoot.)
2. Shoot your scenes from different angles.
3. Use a combination of long shots, medium shots and close ups.
4. Videotape rehearsals. (This is a good practice, since you can sometimes catch an inspired performance or a reaction shot that may be useful later.)
5. Plan for a variety of locations. (Don't confine yourself to one location. Variety in locations adds interest to your video.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is undershooting a problem?
2. In what circumstances may an hour's worth of footage not be enough for a video of less than five minutes?
3. What are some other ways variety may be achieved?

Commercials

Commercials are a powerful and effective sales tool and present unique challenges to the videomaker.

In order for a commercial to be effective, it must be short, to the point, visually interesting, and leave a lasting impression on the viewer.

THREE TYPES OF COMMERCIALS

1. ***The Talking Head*** - In this format we see a head and shoulder shot of a person talking about a product. The person may or may not show the product. This format is not used as extensively now as it once was. Although many commercials feature one person speaking to the camera, shots are varied and not limited to strictly head and shoulder.
2. ***The Story Commercial*** - The story commercial is like a mini-movie, in which we see the product and actors in a story-like situation. Usually several scenes and locations are used.
3. ***Voice Over/Sound Over Commercials*** - This commercial doesn't feature an actor delivering lines. Instead, narrative and sound are played over the action. Typically automobile, soft drink and beer commercials make extensive use of this technique. A good example is the Michael Jackson series of Pepsi commercials.

PREPARING TO PRODUCE A COMMERCIAL

Select a product and determine the format best suited to it.

Establish a time limit. Commercials are usually either 30 or 60 seconds in length. Occasionally a 15 second commercial plays on television, in addition to extended commercials that may run from two to five minutes. Longer commercials are rare.

Write a script that clearly identifies the product by name and addresses the product's usefulness and superiority.

Storyboard the script so that the product receives maximum exposure.

PRODUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Create an appropriate setting.
2. Gather necessary props and products.

EXAMPLE COMMERCIAL

THE AMERICAN EXPRESSION CARD
60 Seconds

VIDEO	AUDIO
FADE IN:	
1. Slow pan across snowy hills.	
2. In the distance a dark speck is seen. The speck grows larger until we identify it as a sno go.	
3. Sno go skids to a stop in front of us.	
4. Driver gets off.	
5. CU of drivers face.	Do you know me?
6. MS of driver beside sno go.	Unless you're into sno go racing, you probably don't.
7. Reaches into jacket and pulls out credit card.	Which is why when I travel, I carry the American Expression Card.
8. ECU of credit card.	
9. MS of driver.	Whether it's business, pleasure, or extra parts for my sno go,
10. CU of credit card.	the American Expression Card delivers.
11. CU of driver.	No matter where I go, even if people don't know my name, I'm never left out in the cold.
12. LS against barren sound.	
13. MS of driver smiling	Because I carry the American Expression Card.
14. LS of driver getting on sno go.	
15. CU of driver ready to leave.	Take my advice, the only name you'll ever need to know is
16. LS of sno go accelerating away.	AMERICAN EXPRESSION
17. Snow go smashes through snow bank of loose snow	
FADE OUT	

3. Rig your set for light and sound.
4. Rehearse scene and check for time.
5. Film commercial.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name three commercial formats and explain each.
2. Which of the three formats would be the easiest to produce? Why?
3. Which of the three formats would be the most difficult to produce? Why?

ASSIGNMENT

Producing a Commercial

Objective: To demonstrate the proper techniques of writing and producing a commercial.

Procedure: Select one of the three commercial formats and create a commercial using the format you chose.

PREPRODUCTION

1. Select a product.
2. Establish time limit. 30 or 60 seconds.
3. Write script.
4. Storyboard script.

PRODUCTION

1. Arrange set.
2. Gather props and products.
3. Light set and wire for sound.
4. Rehearse commercial.
5. Tape.

POSTPRODUCTION

In-camera editing - If in-camera editing, your commercial will have to be shot sequentially, including any titles and inserts that are required. Because in-camera editing is not as accurate as out-of-camera editing, the actual running time of your commercial may be off slightly. For in-camera editing projects, strict adherence to time should not be a matter of concern.

Out-of-camera editing - Out-of-camera editing will allow you to add titles, inserts, and other material during the editing process. Precise times should be observed.

Evaluation: Share your final product with the class. Evaluate your commercial in terms of both written and technical aspects.

SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

Produce additional commercials using other formats.

School functions
Community meetings
Special events
Public service announcements
Yearbook commercials
Commercials for classes ("Enroll in Video Productions")
Class elections

Newscasts

Student newscasts are a good way to keep your student body informed of both local and national events.

As a beginning exercise, you can obtain news wire copy from local radio and television stations. If wire copy cannot be obtained, stories from newspapers can be used.

Once you have experience producing newscasts with wire copy and newspapers, you can then write your own school news and broadcast it to your school and community.

PREPARING TO PRODUCE A NEWSCAST

1. Determine a time limit for your news broadcast and gather wire copy or newspaper copy to be read.
2. Arrange your copy in the order it is to be read and write short transitions to get you from one story to the other.
3. Plan your program introduction and conclusion. Determine if you'll need titles, graphics, and theme music to open and close your newscast.
4. Plan your set needs.
5. Determine your sound and lighting requirements.
6. Select your announcer and crew.

EXAMPLE NEWSCAST

HUSKY NEWS
10 Minutes

VIDEO	AUDIO
FADE IN:	
1. HUSKY EMBLEM GRAPHIC	MUSIC: HUSKY NEWS THEME
2. HUSKY NEWS TITLE	
3. A PRODUCTION OF HUSKY HIGH SCHOOL	MUSIC: FADES OUT
4. LS OF ANNCR	
5. SLOW ZOOM INTO MCU OF ANNCR	ANNCR: Good afternoon, I'm Brian Doe.
	At the top of the news today, new graduation requirements.
	In its regularly scheduled meeting, the regional school board voted unanimously to increase graduation requirements by two credits. Beginning next year freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will be required to take an additional math and science course.
	How do students feel about the change? We took a random poll earlier today to find out.
6. ROLL IN TAPED INTERVIEWS OF STUDENTS (60 SECONDS)	(Audio with roll in)
.	.
.	.
.	.
20. MCU of ANNCR	In sports news this afternoon, the Husky Cross Country team takes on the Panthers at 3 p.m. at the site. According to Coach Johnson, the Panthers will be the toughest competition to date.
.	.
.	.
.	.
.	.
.	.
.	.
34. ZOOM OUT TO LS	. . . until tomorrow. This is Brian Doe reporting.
35. FINAL CREDITS	
36. FADE OUT	MUSIC: Theme music up and out with end credits.

PRODUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Arrange your set for production.
2. Rig for lighting and sound.
3. Rehearse.
4. Tape.

POSTPRODUCTION

1. Review.
2. Evaluate

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some sources of news copy?
2. What purpose do transitions serve?
3. What kinds of school and community news would make good material for your newscast?

ASSIGNMENT

Producing a Newscast

Objective: To demonstrate the techniques of producing a newscast.

Procedure: PREPRODUCTION

1. Establish time limit.
2. Gather copy and arrange it in order to be read.
3. Write transitions.
4. Plan program introduction and conclusion.
5. Plan set.
6. Determine lights and sound needs.
7. Select announcer and crew.

PRODUCTION

1. Arrange set.
2. Rig lighting and sound.
3. Rehearse.
4. Tape.

POSTPRODUCTION*

1. Review.
2. Evaluate

Reminder: When rehearsing, make sure you pay attention to the time. Remember, newscasts operate within very strict time limits.

Evaluation: Evaluate the announcer's performance, the quality and clarity of copy, and the technical aspects of your production.

SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

Produce a complete news, weather and sportscast.

*Since newscasts are usually shot live, this assignment does not require postproduction work.

Music Video

One of the most challenging video projects students can undertake is that of producing a music video. Although they may initially appear to be an easy project, music videos require a great deal of preplanning and creativity.

TYPES OF MUSIC VIDEOS

Concert Video - The concert video is a fairly standard type of video in which an individual or group is filmed in a concert setting. These are often videos of a live performance. Some videos feature performers in a studio singing and playing their instruments as if they were in concert.

Story Song Video - The story song video differs from the concert video in that the group or individual, although singing, acts out a story that has been designed around the song. Story videos often utilize several locations in which the action is played out. Sometimes the individual singer acts out the story without singing directly to the camera. The song is played over the action of the video without the performer lip synching it.

Instrumental Video - Some videos feature performances of instrumental music. In this case the story written around the music cannot be suggested by lyrics. This type of video challenges the videomaker to produce a story based upon the feel and theme of the music.

PRODUCING A STUDENT MUSIC VIDEO

The Concert Video - Of the three formats of music videos, the concert video is the most easily accomplished, since it does not require a scripted story. The challenge of the concert video is to produce a visually interesting video of an individual or group lip synching a song.

It is not enough to set the camera up in front of the stage and allow it to roll until the song is complete. The resulting footage will prove to *be most unimpressive*. For a concert video to succeed, you will have to plan a variety of camera angles, lighting variations, and direct your performers to do more than simply play and sing along with the music.

The Story Song Video - Although the lyrics of a song will suggest its story, your video does not have to closely adhere to the lyrics. In fact your video will prove more successful if you make an effort not to parallel the lyrics. For example, if your song contained the lyrics TIED MY SHOES . . . it wouldn't be necessary to film a shot of someone tying their shoes and then editing that shot into the exact spot where the lyrics occur in the song.

The lyrics should be used to suggest a feel and theme. By not restricting yourself to an exact interpretation of the lyrics, your video will allow you greater creativity in developing your own ideas and stories.

Avoid lip synching. Since you are telling a story of your own, avoid the temptation to have your performers lip synch the lyrics.

The Instrumental Video - As discussed earlier, the instrumental video will allow you the greatest creative challenge, since you'll not have lyrics to restrict your story. The feel and the theme of the music merely serve to suggest a mood to the story you create.

ADDING ADDITIONAL SOUND AND DIALOGUE

After gaining some initial experience with a music video, you may consider producing a longer music video in which you actually add sound effects and include dialogue. Many videos feature a spoken prologue before the music begins.

COPYRIGHTS

Federal low prohibits the unauthorized and uncredited use of published works. This includes songs, in addition to other written works.

You should familiarize yourself with the copyright laws.

In certain instances you may be granted permission to use a particular song by contacting the song publishing company and receiving their approval.

USING ORIGINAL MUSIC

Composing your own original music for your video can add to the creative challenge. You may be able to work with the band and music program at your school to create your own music soundtrack.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are three types of music videos? Explain.
2. What are some advantages and disadvantages of each?
3. Explain why the lyrics of a song should not be literally interpreted.

ASSIGNMENT #1

Understanding the Copyright Law

Objective: To become familiar with the provisions protecting copyrighted material.

Procedure: Research the current copyright law and share your findings with the class.

Each class member may wish to research a specific aspect of the copyright law.

Film
Music
Plays
Books
Periodicals

ASSIGNMENT #2

Writing and Producing a Music Video

Objective: To demonstrate your ability to preplan, write, produce and edit a music video.

Procedure: PREPLANNING

1. Select an appropriate piece of music.
2. Transcribe lyrics (if lyric sheet is not available).
3. Develop a scenario.
4. Script story.
5. Storyboard script or add detailed camera instructions.
6. Determine locations needed.

7. Determine which shots can be filmed as a unit (Same location, different time).
8. Select cast and make crew assignments.
9. Determine prop, costume, and make-up needs.
10. Determine set needs.
11. Develop tentative shooting schedule.
12. Determine lighting and sound needs.

PRODUCTION

1. Organize equipment to be used.
2. Gather costumes, props, make-up.
3. Determine scenes to be shot according to shooting schedule.
4. Dress set.
5. Light and wire for sound (if needed).
6. Rehearse.
7. Shoot scene.
8. Replay footage for evaluation. (Shoot again if necessary.)
9. Take down equipment.
10. Plan next shoot.

POSTPRODUCTION

In-Camera Editing - A music video may be completed by in-camera editing. When filming is complete, the music track may be laid on tape by using the audio dub procedure.

Out-of-Camera Editing

1. Stripe Edit Tape (Control Track).
2. Lay on music track.
3. Edit footage.
4. Evaluate final video.

Production Ideas

THINKING OF A GOOD IDEA IS THE HARD PART

The possibilities for video productions are limitless, but it takes getting used to thinking in terms of projects before ideas come easier.

PRODUCTION IDEAS

1. Magic show
2. Music video with lyrics
3. Music video, instrumental
4. A film without characters
5. Film a local legend
6. Profile of your community
7. Profile of your school
8. A documentary of local heritage
9. Commercial — talking head
10. Commercial — voice over
11. Interview someone from your community
12. Teach a lesson in a class
13. Film students in an air band
14. Lip synch a song
15. Film your own soap opera
16. Film your own melodrama
17. Film a parody of a well-known movie
18. Quiz show
19. Sports event with play by play narrative
20. Newscast
21. Weather report
22. Sportscast
23. Role play scenes about student concerns
24. Create public service announcements (PSA)
25. PSA — Smoking
26. PSA — Child abuse
27. PSA — Drug abuse
28. PSA — Alcohol abuse
29. PSA — Effective education
30. Create a satire
31. Try your hand at animation
32. Write and film a comedy
33. Write and film a silent, slapstick comedy
34. Write and film a mystery
35. Write and film a horror film
36. Write and film a science fiction film
37. Write and film an adventure film
38. Do previews of coming attractions
39. Do a variety show
40. Film a group discussion
41. Film a panel discussion
42. Film a debate

VIDEOSCRIPT

PRODUCTION _____ PAGE____of____

DATE_____

VIDEO	INSTRUCTIONS	AUDIO

VIDEOSCRIPT PRODUCTION ACT I (The Problem)

HELLO AGAIN

PAGE 1 of 3

DATE 10/4/84

VIDEO	INSTRUCTIONS	AUDIO
1. FADE IN: COUPLE ARGUING Ext. 14 unit 2. EACH GO HOME walking home arriving at their houses going inside 3. CUT BETWEEN INTERIORS he looks at picture paces & throws it down she tears off necklace takes off her ring talks to her roommate 4. NEXT MORNING HER HOUSE she is packing her things 5. CUT TO HIS HOUSE he wakes up thinking of her He looks at her picture and then at the phone 6. CUT TO HER ON HER WAY TO THE AIRPORT she gets into a cab 7. CUT TO ROOMMATE ON THE PHONE 8. CUT TO HIM DIALING PHONE he gets a busy signal and hangs up he calls again — still busy he hangs up 9. HE LEAVES HOME 10. ARRIVES AT HER HOUSE 11. ROOMMATE ANSWERS DOOR explains she's left 12. HE RACES TO AIRPORT 13. GO INTO FLASHBACK		SONG LYRICS (May be included here). *REMEMBER: The lyrics need only suggest your story. Don't try to literally interpret the lyrics.*

VIDEOSCRIPT PRODUCTION ACT II (The Flashback)

HELLO AGAIN

PAGE 2 of 3

DATE 10/4/84

VIDEO	INSTRUCTIONS	AUDIO
FLASHBACK OF GOOD TIMES 1. HE BUYS HER FLOWERS 2. THEY ARE BOWLING 3. HAVING DINNER 4. CHASING AFTER EACH OTHER 5. SHOPPING 6. BUYING RING/NECKLACE 7. STUDYING TOGETHER 8. SITTING BY FIRE FLASHBACK OF BAD TIMES 9. HE'S WITH ANOTHER GIRL 10. HE'S BUSY WITH FRIENDS 11. DOESN'T TAKE HER CALLS 12. NOT HOME 13. CUT TO PRESENT		

VIDEOSCRIPT PRODUCTION

ACT III (The Resolution)

HELLO AGAIN

PAGE 3 of 3

DATE 10/4/84

VIDEO	INSTRUCTIONS	AUDIO
1. SHE GOES TO PLANE AS 2. HE ARRIVES AT AIRPORT seeing her, he calls out and waves to her 3. SHE TURNS sees him 4. REVERSE ANGLE ON HIM he waves 5. SHE GOES UP STEPS TO PLANE 6. HE TRIES TO FOLLOW, BUT IS PUSHED BACK BY GATE 7. INSIDE PLANE she chooses a seat then looks through window reverse angle on her looking outside 8. CUT TO HIM CLINGING TO FENCE 9. PLANE TAXIS AWAY 10. HE WALKS AWAY as 11. PLANE TAKES OFF		

43. Video tape school and community meetings
44. Profile interesting local people
45. Do a talk show
46. Film students giving speeches
47. Do a film on what students plan to do after high school
48. Profile local businesses
49. Film a pep rally
50. Film a play rehearsal
51. Profile students who hold local jobs
52. Get student reactions to important questions they face
53. Do a program on the local health care facilities
54. Do a program on the vocational offerings at your school
55. Do a program on poverty
56. Profile the transportation in your community
57. Do a video yearbook
58. Do a program on the local crisis line
59. Do a profile on community recreation
60. Profile what graduates can expect to do in college
61. Do a program on housing in your community.
62. Student reactions to graduation requirements
63. Profile a new student
64. Profile a teacher
65. Profile a class
66. Profile on student dress
67. Film students on a school trip
68. Do a film on student hobbies and interests
69. Profile your library and its resources
70. Create your own continuing series
71. Film the contents of a typical student locker
72. Film feet to see if people can be identified
73. Film a school dance
74. Contrast the type of music teachers like with that of students
75. Do a profile on your principal

CULTURAL HERITAGE

1. Sled building
2. Dog racing
3. Kayaking
4. Cooking
5. Dance
6. Subsistence skills
7. Legends
8. Personality profiles
9. Local history
10. Places of interest
11. Wildlife
12. Hunting
13. Fishing
14. Alaska native issues
15. ANCSA
16. Rural development
17. Suicide
18. Identity
19. Education
20. Traditions
21. Elders
22. Goal setting
23. A day in the life of . . . ?
24. Values
25. Art and artifacts

Add to the list your own ideas.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which ideas on the above list would be most difficult to undertake? Why?
2. Which ideas would be easy to accomplish? Explain.
3. Which ideas could be accomplished without editing?

ASSIGNMENT

Preplanning

Objective: To preplan production needs.

Procedure: Select an idea and determine equipment needs, locations, and any other production considerations.

Continuity

CONTINUITY IS THE EVEN FLOW FROM ONE SCENE TO ANOTHER

How many times have you watched a car chase in which a car sped around a corner and lost a hubcap? Then, a few seconds later in another scene that missing hubcap magically reappeared on the car?

What happened was the film lost its continuity. Most likely the car chase was filmed in a different series of scenes than was edited.

Films and videos become disconnected when scenes don't flow evenly from one to the next. Actors may be wearing different clothes, because a scene was filmed over a period of more than one day. Cars may or may not have hubcaps and dents because editing changed the sequence in which the shooting was done. Scenes shot on different days may appear different because of changes in the weather. One day it's sunny and the next day it's overcast. Snow is particularly uncooperative.

Continuity is something that should be considered both during the shooting stage of your production and editing. With a little advanced planning, problems can be minimized.

All productions should begin with a script. During preproduction meetings, consideration should be given to situations that might arise when a scene that takes place in a single period of time requires more than one day to film.

Actors should be reminded to bring the same clothes back to school and use the same props. Hair styles should remain the same.

When weather is a factor, you should attempt to complete shots on the same day to avoid possible mismatches later.

Maintaining continuity can help give your production a professional look. Don't shortchange your audience by overlooking details that you can do something about. If a viewer is paying attention to the sudden change of clothes of your cast, then they aren't paying attention to your story.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss other examples of continuity problems you have seen or can think of.
2. Why is an even flow from one scene to the next important?
3. Discuss some solutions to the problems you thought of in question #1.

4. Postproduction

The Editing System

In order to edit video footage and sound outside of the camera, you will need an editing sytem.

Unlike film editing, editing videotape is an electronic process, since the videotape itself is neither cut or spliced. Videotape editing is achieved by re-recording original footage onto a master edit tape.

Editing systems include the following equipment.

2 VCR's
2 Monitors
1 Edit Controller

VCR's

Generally one VCR is labeled as the SOURCE recorder and the other is the RECORD (edit) recorder.

The SOURCE recorder is used to locate and play original footage that is to be transferred onto the master edit tape in the RECORD machine.

The RECORD VCR is the recorder onto which your original footage is transferred (re-recorded) in an edited form. Simply, you are rearranging scenes and footage into a final edited video.

MONITORS

One monitor will be connected to your *source* recorder, which will allow you to view original footage and select the exact material you wish to edit.

The other monitor is connected to the *record* VCR and permits you to view the material as it is being edited.

Some texts suggest that editing can be accomplished with only one monitor that is connected to the record VCR. Two monitors will give you much more flexibility during the editing process and allow for greater accuracy.

EDIT CONTROLLER

The edit control console is the unit that links both the source and record recorders together and synchronizes the editing process.

Separate console controls will permit you to operate each recorder from the edit controller itself, instead of having to adjust controls on each recorder.

A frame search will allow for scanning footage on both recorders from 1/25 to 10 times normal speed in both forward and reverse directions.

A frame, seconds, minutes and hour counter for each recorder assures synchronization and accuracy of your edits, in addition to providing running times for each segment you edit and an overall running time of your project.

Edit entry and exit buttons permit the operator to begin and end an edit at predetermined points.

An edit preview button allows edits to be programmed for preview purposes only, without making the edit permanent. Should the operator decide the edit is not desirable, the preview edit can be cancelled and a new edit programmed.

The edit controller will permit the operator to edit the video track and two audio tracks, channels 1 and 2. All three tracks may be edited at once, or each may be edited separately by selecting the track to be edited.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why are two VCR's needed for editing?
2. What is the advantage of having two monitors?
3. What does the edit controller do?

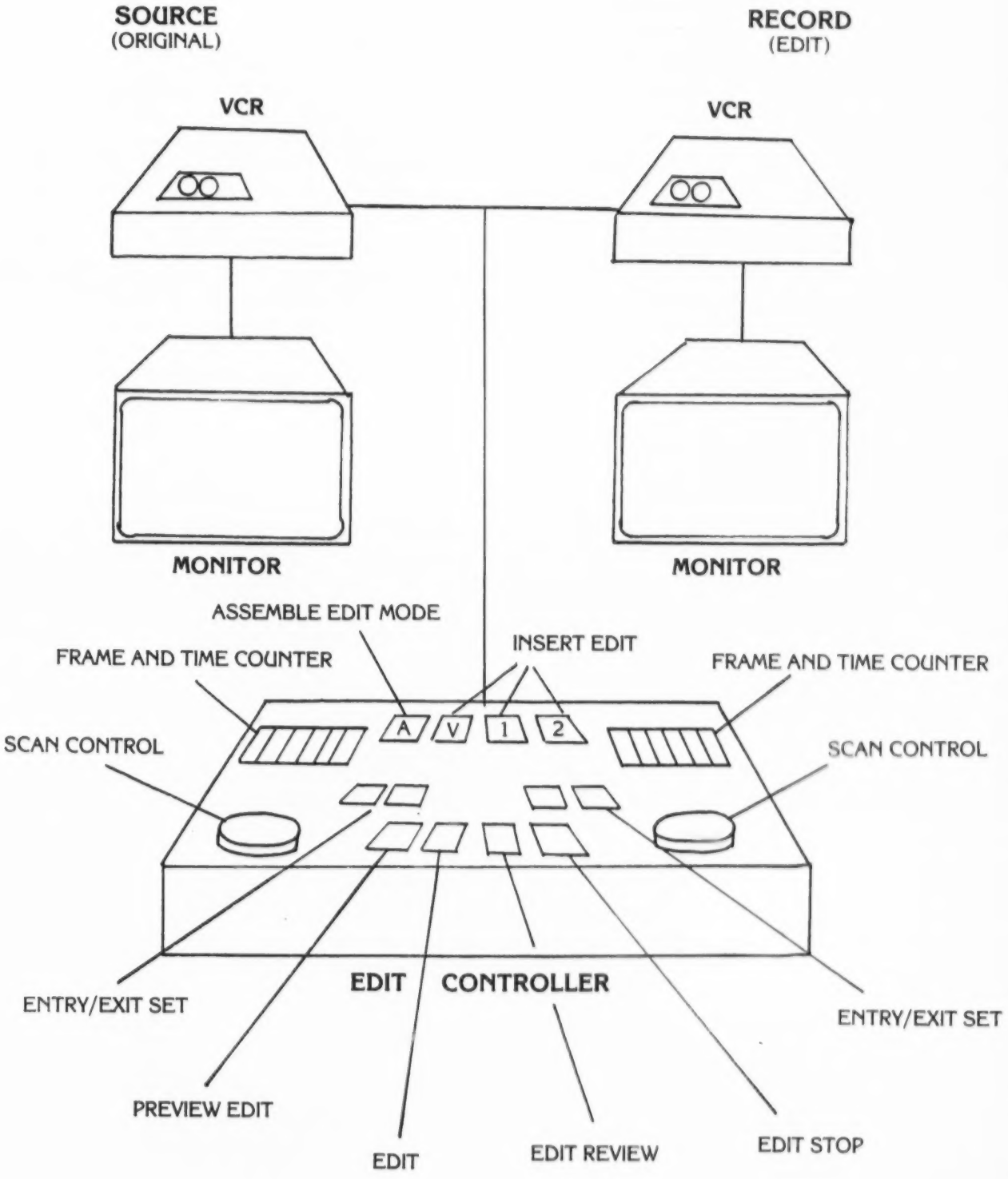
ASSIGNMENT

Becoming Familiar with Editing Equipment

Objective: To demonstate an understanding of editing equipment and its functions.

Procedure: Note how everything is set up and learn how the system is turned on and off and what each piece of equipment does.

EDITING SYSTEM



With the teacher or someone else who is trained on the editing system, work your way through the editing equipment in your system.

If instruction manuals are available, review for additional information.

Videotape

Half inch videotape plays at 30 frames per second (fps). Although the frames cannot be discerned with the naked eye, the frames are actually diagonally positioned on the tape.

Occasionally during the editing process, what is known as a dirty or torn edit will be made. A dirty edit is easy to perceive during playback because the edit will draw attention to itself in the form of a blip or a jump. By slowing down the playback recorder, you can observe the bad edit. The edit will appear as two torn pictures pieced together. What you have is a little of one frame pieced together with a little of another frame.

The only way to clean up the edit is to make a new edit. Because of the sensitivity of the equipment you are using, some footage is almost impossible to edit together. This is often true when footage that is strikingly dissimilar in lighting is edited together. Other factors that may create an editing problem are signals generated by machinery that interfere with the control track of your footage.

Whenever possible, try to record out of the frequency range of engines and machinery.

INFORMATION CONTAINED ON VIDEOTAPE

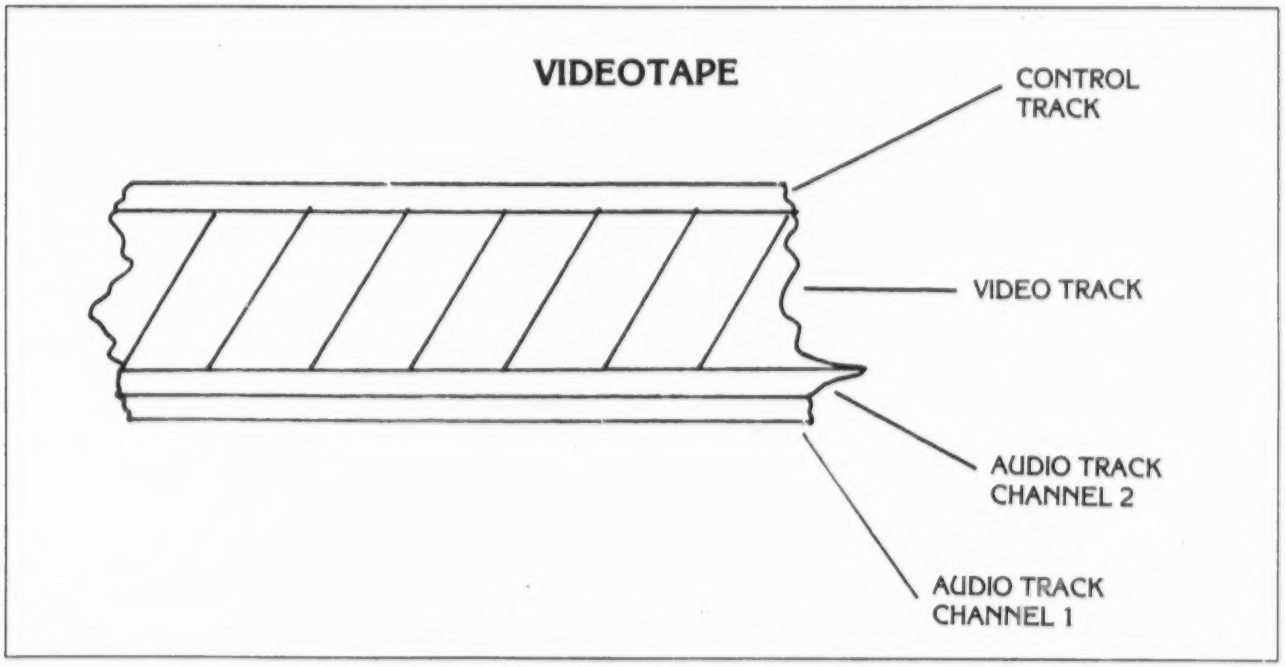
Video Track - The video track is that portion of the tape on which all video footage is contained.

Audio Track - Two separate audio tracks carry sound on a videotape: channels 1 and 2. During the original recording process, sound is recorded onto both tracks at once. During the editing process, all of the original sound can be edited onto one track only. The advantage of having two tracks is that dialogue can be recorded on one track while sound effects and background music can be recorded on the other.

Control Track - A control track allows for the proper synchronization of both your source tape and edit tape during the editing process. (Control tracks are the electronic equivalent of sprocket holes in film).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many frames per second does videotape play?
2. What is a dirty or torn edit?
3. What is the advantage of being able to record on two audio tracks?



Editing

For many video producers, editing is the most challenging, creative, and satisfying aspect of the video productions process.

Editing permits the videomaker to assemble original footage in any order and sequence he or she chooses. Scenes that have been shot in no particular order can be arranged chronologically, or they may be arranged to suggest flashbacks and flash forwards. Scenes may be cross-cut to suggest simultaneous action in different locations, and cut to imply action and suspense.

The important thing to remember is that editing cannot take the place of what has not been filmed. Editing can only reshape footage, it cannot create footage.

Video editing is the process of taking original footage and re-recording it on another tape. In what order you choose to re-record the footage becomes the basis of the editing process itself.

TWO TYPES OF VIDEO EDITING

Edits may be created on an editing system in one of two ways. One method is called *assemble editing* and the other is referred to as *insert editing.*

Though both methods make effective edits, the two methods are not compatible. Once you begin editing by one method you will not be able to switch to the other.

Assemble Editing - Assemble editing begins by engaging the assemble edit mode on the edit controller.

The process itself is the simple sequential recording of one sequence after the other. Video tracks and audio tracks are edited together at the same time.

The disadvantage to assemble editing is that if you should decide to make a change in what you've edited, you must re-edit everything from the point of the change to the end of your program.

Insert Editing - Of the two methods of editing, insert editing is easier and offers the best results.

Unlike assemble editing, in which original footage can be transferred directly onto a blank tape, insert editing requires that the record tape (edit tape) already contain a continuous and uninterrupted image on the tape before any editing can take place.

The prerecorded material on the record tape (edit tape) serves to provide a signal that feeds information to the edit controller and allows for insert editing to take place. This signal, which controls the video track and both audio tracks, is referred to as a control track.

Once a control track has been made, you can then proceed with the insert editing process. The advantage to insert editing is that all three tracks (video and audio 1 and 2) can be edited separately or all together. The second and most beneficial aspect of insert editing is that scenes can be *inserted* into previously edited footage without having to re-edit the rest of your tape. In other words, if, after finishing your tape, you decided to change a scene in the middle of your tape, you could do so, assuming the new scene is the same length, without having to re-edit the remainder of your tape. That in itself makes the added step of making a control track worthwhile.

MAKING A CONTROL TRACK

Control tracks are a necessary part of the insert editing process. Without a control track, insert editing cannot take place.

To do the job it must do, the control track must be a continuous and uninterrupted video signal that is equal to or longer than the total running time of your video project.

For example, if you anticipate your final project will be ten minutes long, then you'll require at least ten minutes of uninterrupted control track on the edit tape.

In the event your edited footage should run longer than your control track, the edit controller will not accept any edits once the control track signal has run out. You will not be able to add additional control track, as the adding on of additional control track will require an assemble edit, and, as previously stated, insert editing and assemble editing are not compatible.

Remember: Make your control tracks longer than you think you'll need. More is best. If you plan to master several programs onto one tape, it is best to spend the time creating a full two hour control track tape.

TWO WAYS OF MAKING A CONTROL TRACK (Striping a tape)

1. ***Prerecorded Tape Method*** - You may use any prerecorded video tape as a control track as long as the tape is not broken up with pauses, sections of unrecorded footage

(blank tape), or the recorder has not been switched on and off at some time during the recording process.

Anywhere a glitch occurs, the control track signal will be interrupted (as in the above examples) and the edit controller will refuse to accept the edit.

Prerecorded footage may include tapes of old television programs, your own edited class videos, or movies.

2. ***Turning Off the Camera Iris*** - The most effective way to make a control track is to load a tape into your VCR, put it on play/record, and let it record with your video camera iris turned off.

   Although recording, the image recorded will be solid black. The advantage of making a black control track is that when you begin and end your editing, you can cut to black, which will appear similar to a fade in and fade out to black.

Although editing is in many ways the most creative aspect of video filmmaking, it can also be frustrating. Editing requires as much preplanning as scriptwriting and filming.

Learning to operate editing equipment and then learning to master the techniques of effective editing will take time and experience.

Before beginning to edit, be sure to familiarize yourself with the equipment and the operations manuals.

Remember that assemble editing and insert editing are different and require different approaches.

Practice both video and sound editing.

Lastly, don't forget to stripe a tape (control track) before insert editing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a control track?
2. Why is it necessary to make a control track?
3. Why should a control track be longer than your film?
4. What are the two methods of editing and how do they differ?

ASSIGNMENT

Making a Control Track

Objective: To demonstrate the procedures used for producing a usable insert edit control track.

Procedure:
1. Select some previously recorded footage to be used as a control track. Using the editor, edit some footage onto the edit tape (tape with control track footage).
2. Make a control track by turning off your camera iris. Edit some material onto your blank control track tape.

Evaluation: Compare the results of both methods of control track. Which works better? Why? Did your edit controller reject any edits? If so, why?

Rollback

PLENTY OF LEAD-IN TIME EQUALS PLENTY OF ROLLBACK

In an earlier lesson we touched on the problem of rollback. To avoid rollback problems, we said that you should allow a good 10 seconds of lead-in time before you call action. Now we'll see how that lead-in time figures into the editing process and solves the problem of rollback.

When an edit is programmed, both the source recorder and the record (edit) recorder are coded with electronic starting points.

Because both recorders require sufficient time to come up to speed, they must be able to rollback past the point of the intended edit in order to attain the normal operating speed to make the edit. Think of this process as taking a running start.

Rollback on all ½" editors is five seconds. In other words, when you program an edit, both recorders will rollback five seconds (150 frames) prior to the edit, before rolling forward and making the edit in the exact place you want. (Remember: Edits are made when the recorders are rolling, not from full stops.)

What happens if you don't have five seconds of recorded material before the edit point?

Disaster!

Because the edit controller only reads control track material (video footage), if you don't have five seconds of footage before your edit point, the recorder will continue to wind backwards until it finds it. In other words, the recorder will wind back over blank tape until it finds enough footage to make five seconds.

If this happens, your edit points are no longer

synchronized and the edit that is made (if at all) will not be the one you programmed. Also, if the recorder runs on to some unrecorded tape during the edit, the edit will be rejected because the control track has been lost.

KEEP IN MIND

Control track applies to both source tapes and edit (record) tapes.

Although it is only the edit (record) tape that requires a continuous and uninterrupted control track, all of your source footage must have at least five seconds of footage prior to the point you want to make your edits.

Lots of good footage will be lost if you don't remember to allow proper lead-in time for every shot you make.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain rollback.
2. How far back do the source and record (edit) recorders rollback during an edit?
3. What happens if there is not enough rollback footage?

Consult Your Editing Manual

ASSIGNMENT

Dealing With Rollback

Objective: To demonstrate how to avoid problems associated with rollback.

Procedure: Select various sections of tape from your source tape and edit onto a record (edit) tape.

Program edits that allow for enough rollback and others that do not.

Evaluation: Note the steps the editor goes through to either accept or reject an edit.

Compare the results of a good edit with a poor edit.

Editing Techniques

Your goal in editing should be to produce a cleanly edited, coherent production.

To reach that goal will require a great deal of time and practice. The best way to learn the techniques of editing is to edit. The more experience you have at the editing console, the easier it will become and the more you'll learn. It is important to keep in mind that editing requires as much preplanning as scriptwriting and filming.

During the filming stage of your production, you should think ahead to the editing process. Giving some thought to what your edited production will look like will help guide you in shooting scenes from different angles, and shooting cutaways and inserts.

STRAIGHT CUT

Chances are your equipment will not include special effects equipment that will allow you to dissolve from one scene to another or produce wipes and other specialized effects.

Most often you'll just use a straight cut from one scene to the next. For example, in one scene your main character is at work and in the very next scene he or she is at home. Although we haven't seen the main character travel from work to home, we understand that through the magic of straight cut editing time has passed and it was not necessary for us to see that character get in his or her car and drive home. Editing allows time to be compressed, and it normally does not distract from the film if everything is not shown.

FADE OUT*

If your video camera features a fade out control, then you have still another transitional option available to you. Instead of cutting straight to another scene, a fade out allows your previous scene to gradually fade from full lighting to a blackout. When the scene is fully dark, you may then wish to edit in your next scene.

The fade out can be used to suggest that more time passes than that suggested by the straight cut. Or it may signify the end of your film as you slowly fade into black.

CUTTING ON ACTION

The most often repeated phrase in regards to editing is *cut on action.*

Cutting on action means that when editing a scene, if you can make your edit cut on an action, the less likely you'll create an uneven edit.

*KEEP IN MIND — The fade out has to be planned for during production, not postproduction. The editor cannot create a fade, therefore the fade must be filmed with your video camera during the actual shooting.

For example, if you want to show a student going into a classroom from the hall and the very next shot we are to see is that same student coming into the class from the hall, then cut on the action of the door.

Shot #1 - Student walks down hall. Puts hand on door handle and pushes into the classroom. (Make cut when student is halfway inside.)

Shot #2 - Camera now placed inside room. Student performs the same action and comes through door. (Edit is made as the student is halfway through the door.)

By editing this sequence this way, the movement to the eye appears fluid and continuous.

In contrast, if in the first shot we saw the student go through the door and then in the next shot that student was already inside and the door was already closed, that action would have appeared awkward because in our mind's eye we could not imagine how the door closed so fast. The movement wouldn't flow.

THE JUMP CUT

A jump cut is created when edited action is completely mismatched.

For example, if from one angle you showed a girl picking up an apple to eat, and then from another angle you showed her biting into it without having shown the follow through action, you would have created a jump cut, because the viewers did not see what should have been a continuous action.

Whenever possible, cut on action and follow through.

PACE/VARIETY

Once you begin to gain experience editing, you'll begin to notice that some scenes you edit seem to move along quite nicely, while others seem slow and dull and appear to go nowhere. If scenes seem to drag it may be because they are lacking pace and variety.

For example, if your scene was about a basketball team playing a big and important game, and the only footage you had was four or five minutes shot from the top of the bleachers in your gym, that could get boring fast. After looking at the footage several times, you might realize it doesn't convey the excitement and pressure of an important game.

The solution might be to shorten the footage. Next you might want to include some close up shots of screaming fans, energetic cheerleaders, banners and posters, and the faces of the players and coaches as they watch their team from the bench.

By shortening your scene, using quicker cuts, and including a variety of different shots and angles, you've made dull footage appear more interesting.

Keep in mind an earlier point, *editing cannot create what has not been filmed.* So if you know a scene is going to be important to the final production, plan for pace and variety during the filming process. Give yourself more than enough footage to work with.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is editing regarded as the most creative aspect of video filmmaking?
2. What is a straight cut?
3. How does a fade differ from a straight cut?
4. What is a jump cut? How can jump cuts be avoided?
5. What is meant by cutting on action?
6. Why are pace and variety important?

ASSIGNMENT

Putting Into Practice Editing Techniques

Objective: To demonstrate the proper techniques of videotape editing.

Procedure: Film students involved in various actions from a variety of angles and distances. Examples: Going through doors, picking up books, sitting down. Edit these actions together.

Evaluation: How well do the edits work?
Are there any jump cuts?
Did film editor cut on action?
Is improvement necessary? Explain.

Sound Editing

Sound and dialogue may be transferred from your source tape to your record (edit) tape in the same way the video image is transferred.

Both sound and video may be transferred at the same time, or separately.

In order to obtain the proper sound levels on your record (edit) tape, a V.U. meter on the edit/recorder will permit you to adjust the sound to the desired levels. Audio levels should peak out

at the zero mark on the V.U. meter. Levels that exceed the peak range may be too loud and distort during playback.

Since you have two audio tracks to work with, one track may be used to edit dialogue and the other may be used to edit sound effects and background music.

When using background music with dialogue, be sure the music is not so loud that it drowns out what the speakers are saying.

Be sure not to record background music at the same time you are shooting a scene with dialogue. During the editing process you'll find the music will mismatch, because although your actors may have stopped and started their lines again, chances are the background played continuously. You'll find it much easier to put the music on later as a separate track.

In the case of a music video, once you've striped your tape (control track) you'll want to lay down your music track first. Once the music is on, you engage only the video mode and edit your video footage. Your music track serves as a guide and provides the overall running time of your film.

Remember: Disengage both audio channels after you've laid your music down, otherwise you'll record over your song.

Sound and music can be introduced directly into the record (edit) recorder from another audio source, or all the sounds and music you need can be recorded on your source tape and transferred during editing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the advantage of having two audio channels?
2. Why shouldn't music be playing in the background when your performers are delivering lines?
3. When making a music video, why is it best to lay down a music track before editing video footage?

ASSIGNMENT

Sound Editing Activities

Objective: To demonstrate the various techniques of sound editing.

Activity #1: Record a new soundtrack for previously edited material

Activity #2: Film and edit a conversation between two people. Be sure a variety of angles are shot.

Activity #3: Film a scene requiring dialogue and edit. After the dialogue and video have been edited, add background music that does not overpower the conversation.

Activity #4: Record a music track onto your edit tape and then edit video footage to it. (May or may not be a music video.)

5.
The Next Step

Now What?

What happens to your video projects after you've completed them and received your grade is really up to you.

Like any creative effort, your endeavors ought to be shared with others, after all, your video projects are an expression of your ideas and an example of your talent and creativity.

Share your projects with the rest of the school and community by hosting a video night. Although you may have some reservations about the outcome of your projects, others will be enthusiastic. You can create an expectation on the part of the school and community for more projects. In time student video projects will be as eagerly awaited as the school newspaper and yearbook, class plays and basketball games.

As you gain experience, your projects will become more complex and sophisticated. You are limited by only your imagination.

Some students will want to continue video work after high school. Opportunities exist in both the work place and college to continue working in video. By saving copies of your high school projects, you can use them as a video resume.

Although the video industry is highly competitive, employment opportunities exist for those who have the desire to succeed. Whether you're interested in video as only a hobby or as a prospective profession, working with video will continue to prove rewarding.